AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

VISHNU SAVES CREATION

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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

The three worlds of the universe were reeling from shock: the asuras had taken control! Even the plants were withering away. Only the great Lord Vishnu could make things right again. He got both devas and asuras to churn up life-giving nectar from the ocean of milk, and then ensured that the asuras were kept away from this gift of immortality.

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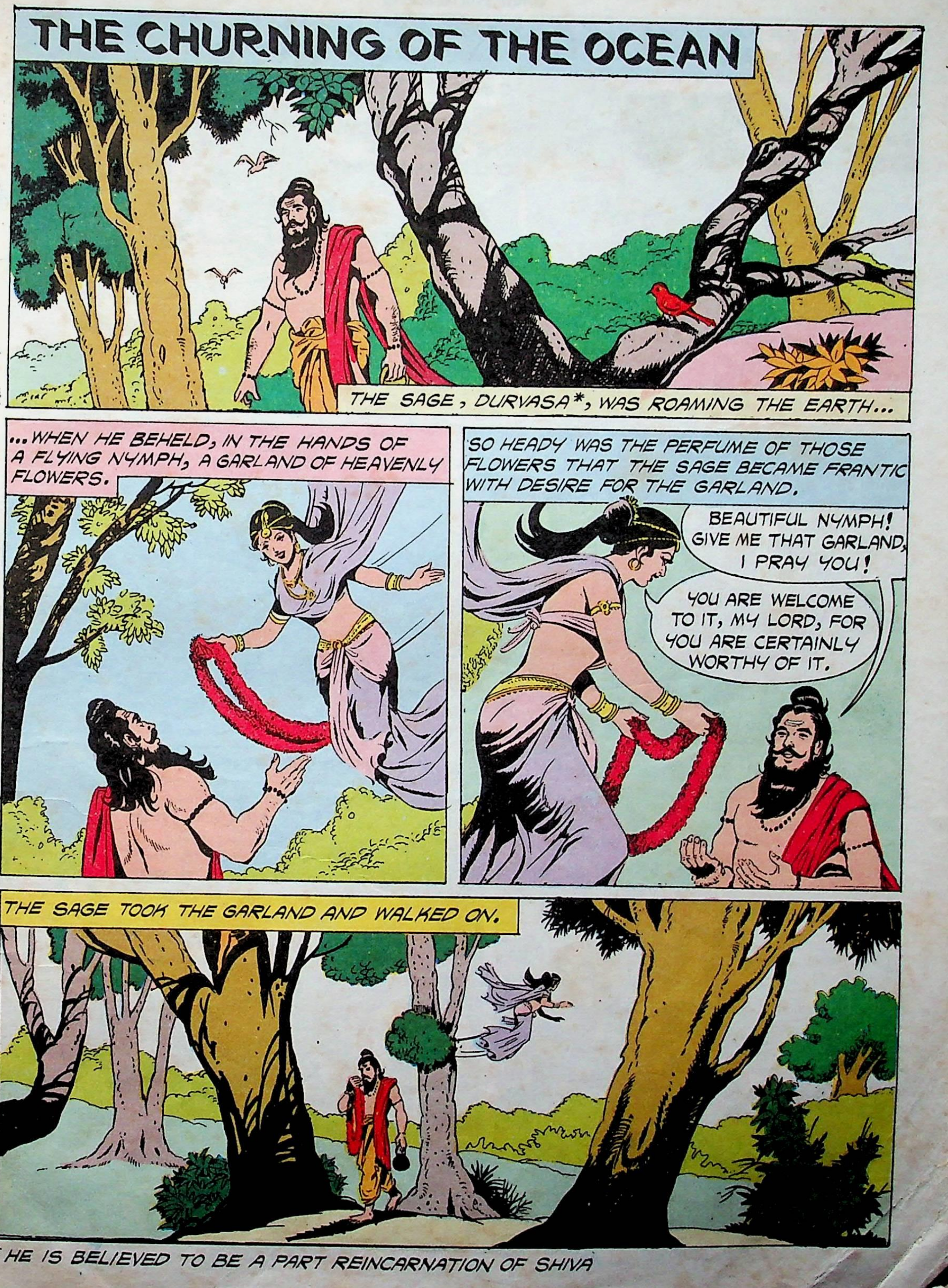
THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN


THE SAGE, DURVASA*, WAS ROAMING THE EARTH...
...WHEN HE BEHELD, IN THE HANDS OF A FLYING NYMPH, A GARLAND OF HEAVENLY FLOWERS.
SO HEADY WAS THE PERFUME OF THOSE FLOWERS THAT THE SAGE BECAME FRANTIC WITH DESIRE FOR THE GARLAND.
BEAUTIFUL NYMPH! GIVE ME THAT GARLAND, I PRAY YOU!
YOU ARE WELCOME TO IT, MY LORD, FOR YOU ARE CERTAINLY WORTHY OF IT.
THE SAGE TOOK THE GARLAND AND WALKED ON.

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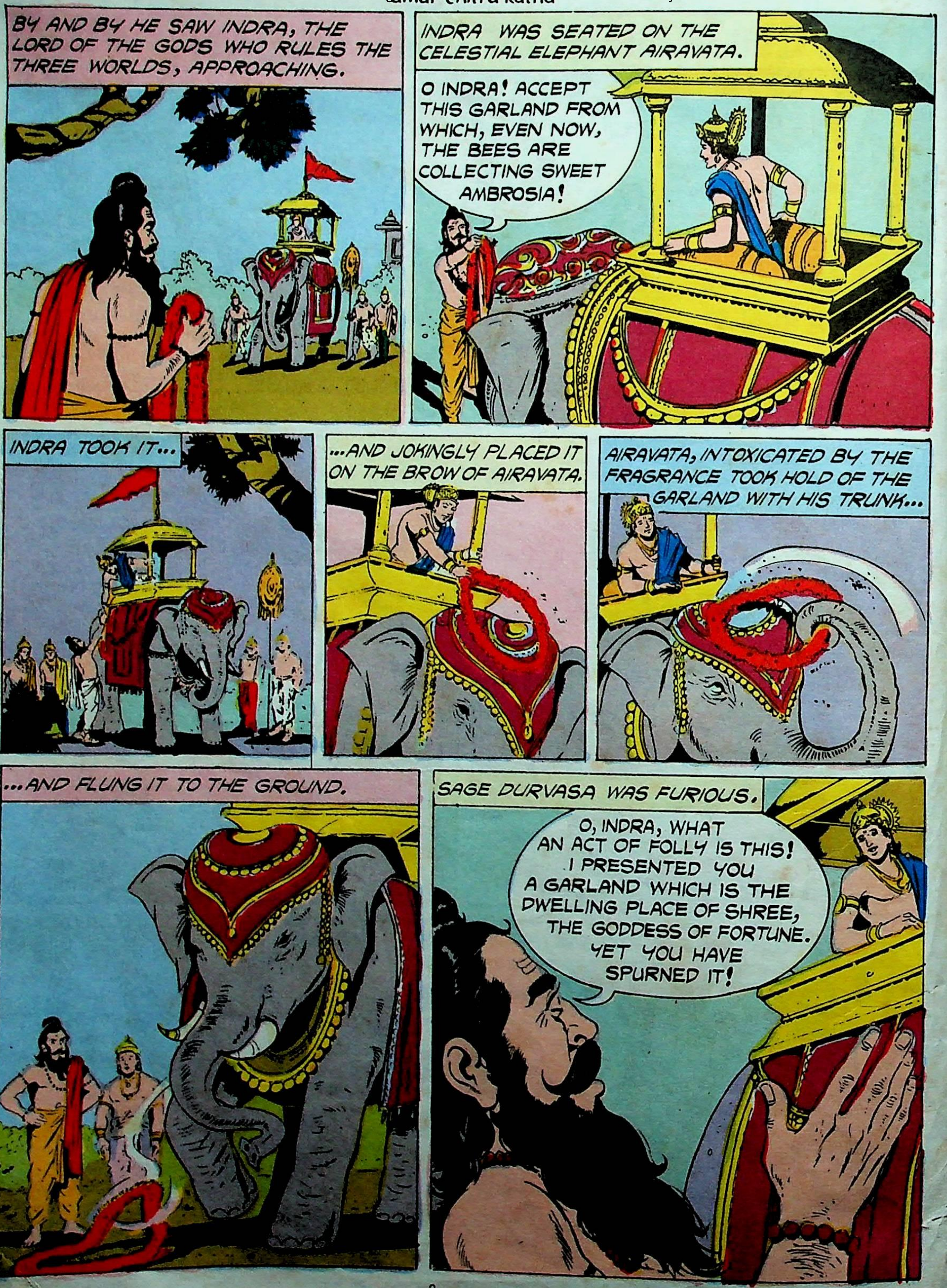
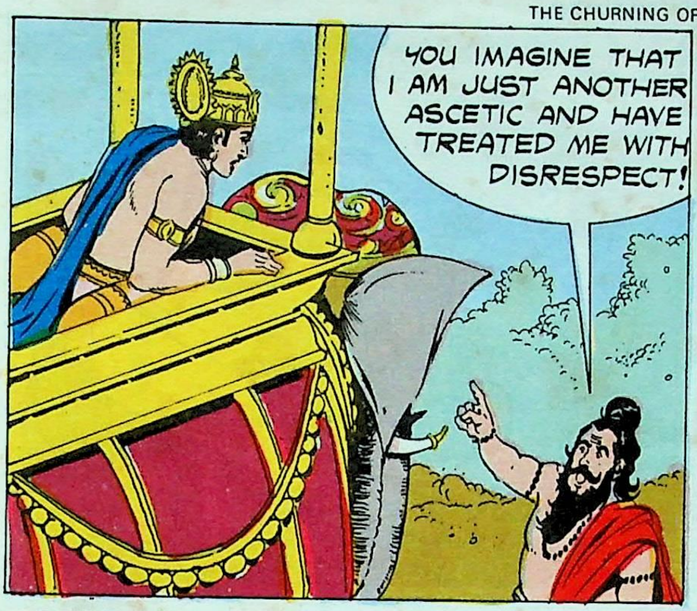
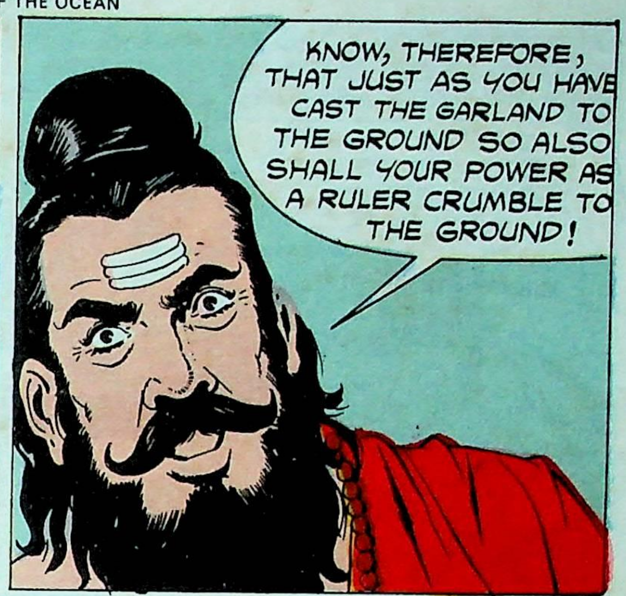
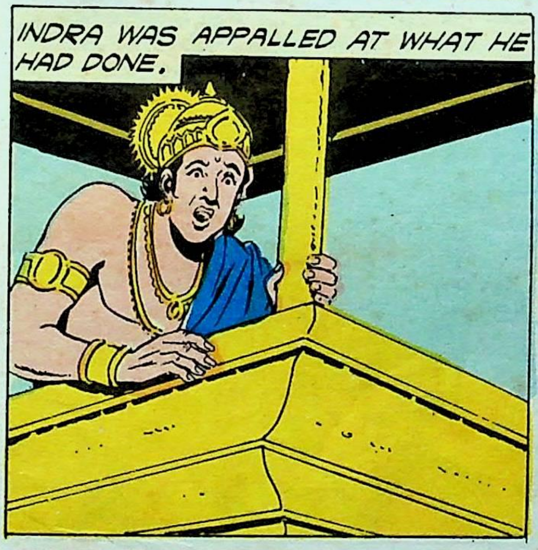
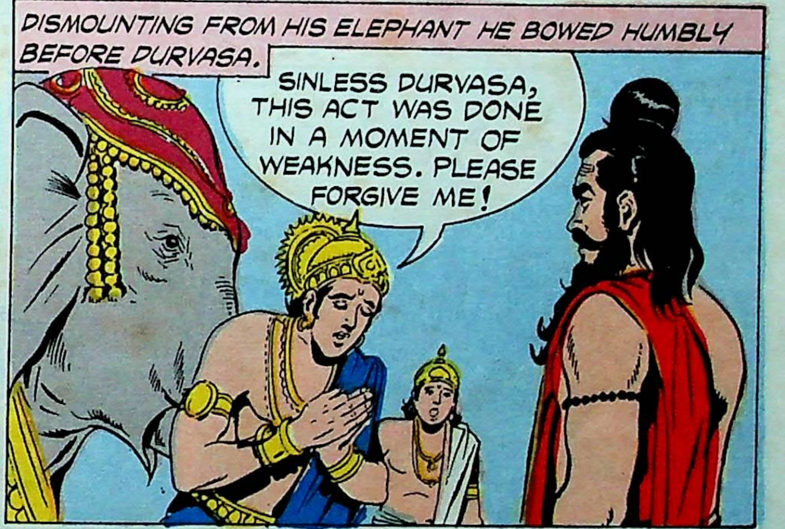
* HE IS BELIEVED TO BE A PART REINCARNATION OF SHIVA

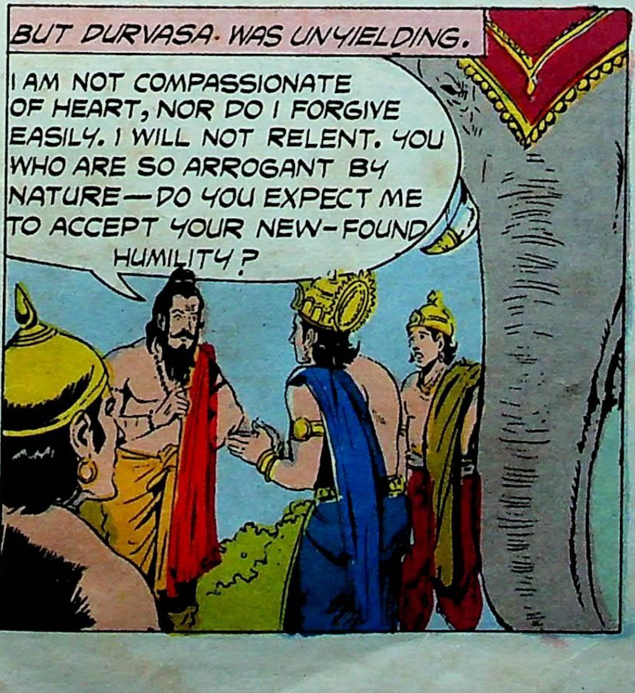

BY AND BY HE SAW INDRA, THE LORD OF THE GODS WHO RULES THE THREE WORLDS, APPROACHING.
INDRA WAS SEATED ON THE CELESTIAL ELEPHANT AIRAVATA.
O INDRA! ACCEPT THIS GARLAND FROM WHICH, EVEN NOW, THE BEES ARE COLLECTING SWEET AMBROSIA!
INDRA TOOK IT...
...AND JOKINGLY PLACED IT ON THE BROW OF AIRAVATA.
AIRAVATA, INTOXICATED BY THE FRAGRANCE TOOK HOLD OF THE GARLAND WITH HIS TRUNK...
...AND FLUNG IT TO THE GROUND.
SAGE DURVASA WAS FURIOUS.
O, INDRA, WHAT AN ACT OF FOLLY IS THIS! I PRESENTED YOU A GARLAND WHICH IS THE DWELLING PLACE OF SHREE, THE GODDESS OF FORTUNE. YET YOU HAVE SPURNED IT!

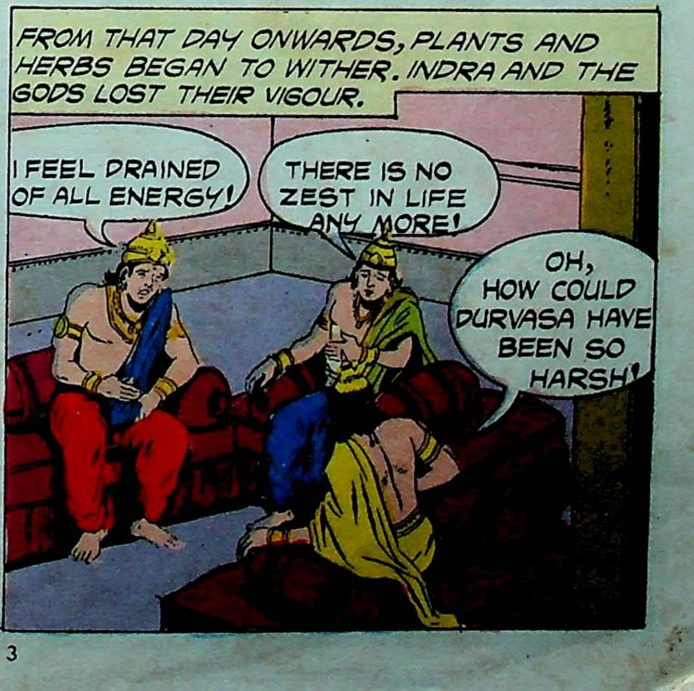

YOU IMAGINE THAT I AM JUST ANOTHER ASCETIC AND HAVE TREATED ME WITH DISRESPECT!

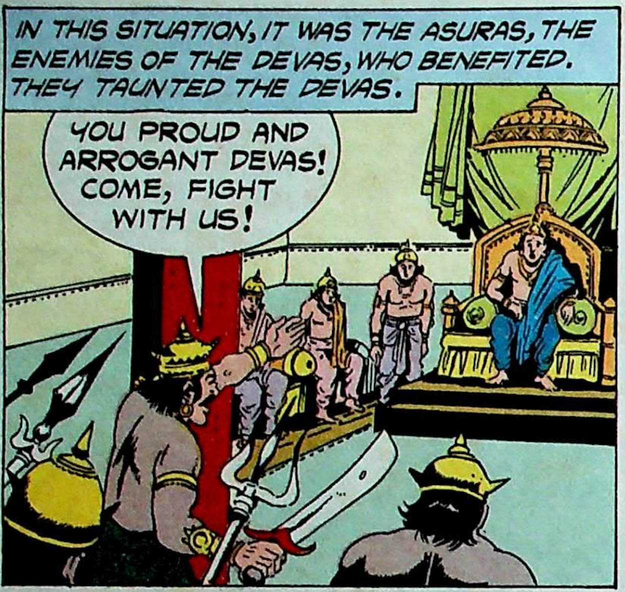

KNOW, THEREFORE, THAT JUST AS YOU HAVE CAST THE GARLAND TO THE GROUND SO ALSO SHALL YOUR POWER AS A RULER CRUMBLE TO THE GROUND!


INDRA WAS APPALLED AT WHAT HE HAD DONE.

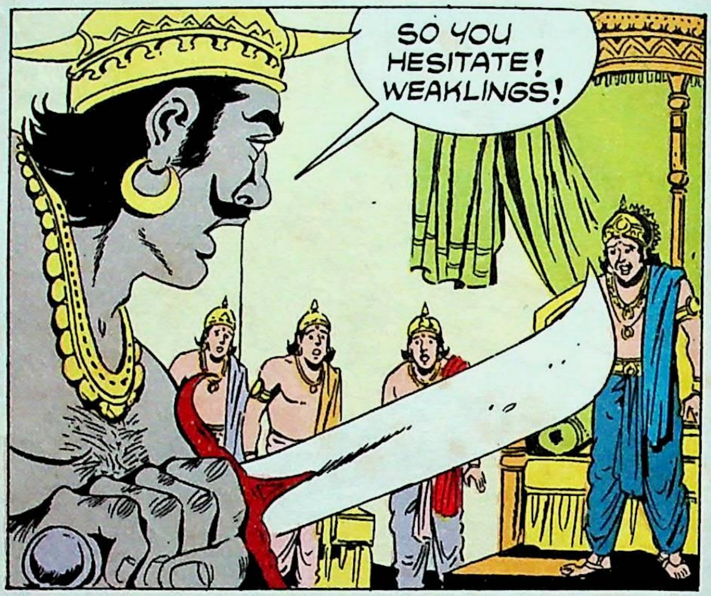

DISMOUNTING FROM HIS ELEPHANT HE BOWED HUMBLY BEFORE DURVASA.
SINLESS DURVASA, THIS ACT WAS DONE IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS. PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

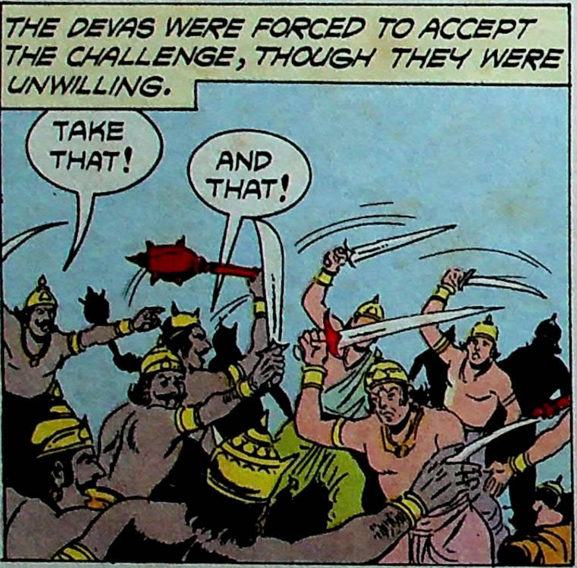

BUT DURVASA WAS UNYIELDING.
I AM NOT COMPASSIONATE OF HEART, NOR DO I FORGIVE EASILY. I WILL NOT RELENT. YOU WHO ARE SO ARROGANT BY NATURE—DO YOU EXPECT ME TO ACCEPT YOUR NEW-FOUND HUMILITY?


FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS, PLANTS AND HERBS BEGAN TO WITHER. INDRA AND THE GODS LOST THEIR VIGOUR.
I FEEL DRAINED OF ALL ENERGY!
THERE IS NO ZEST IN LIFE ANY MORE!
OH, HOW COULD DURVASA HAVE BEEN SO HARSH!

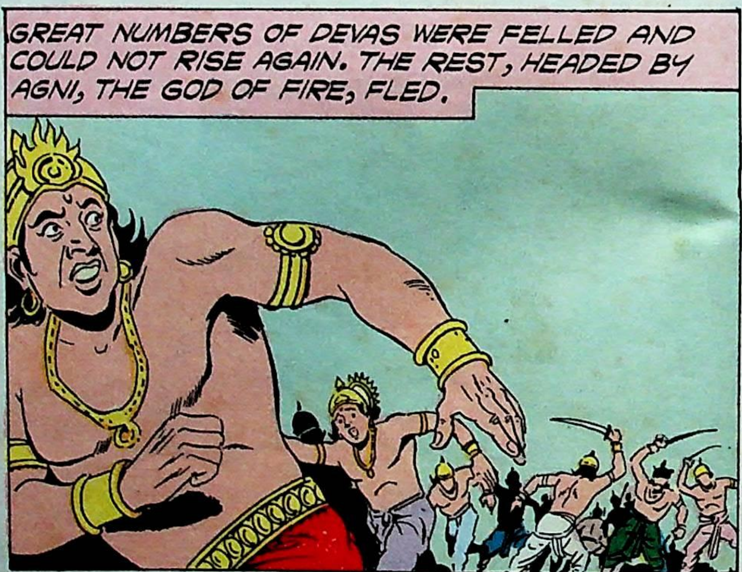

IN THIS SITUATION, IT WAS THE ASURAS, THE ENEMIES OF THE DEVAS, WHO BENEFITED. THEY TAUNTED THE DEVAS.

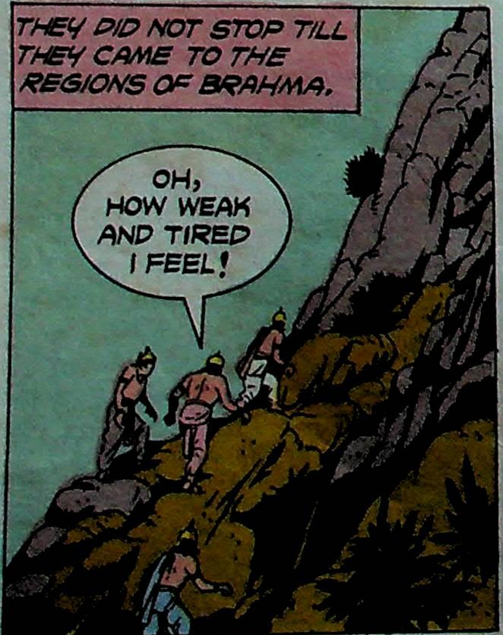
YOU PROUD AND ARROGANT DEVAS! COME, FIGHT WITH US!


SO YOU HESITATE! WEAKLINGS!

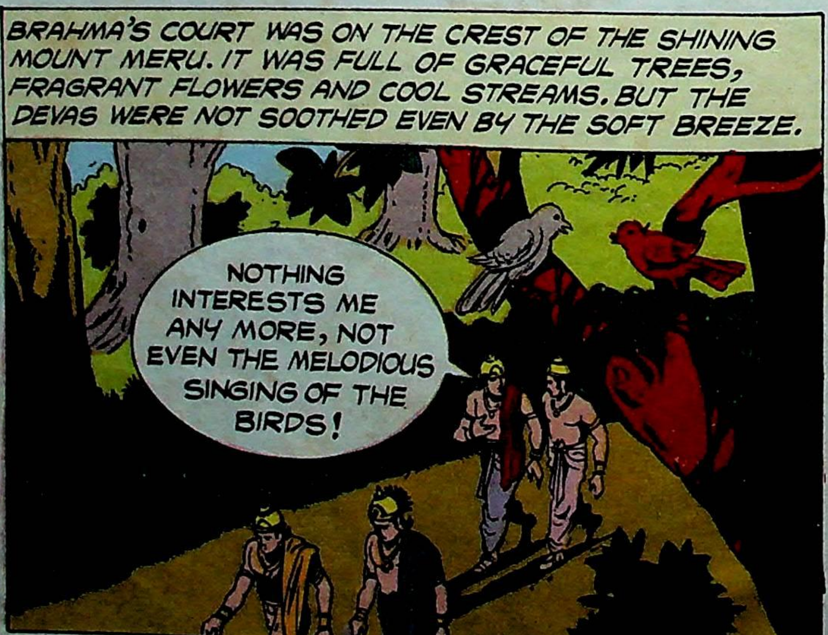

THE DEVAS WERE FORCED TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, THOUGH THEY WERE UNWILLING.

TAKE THAT!
AND THAT!

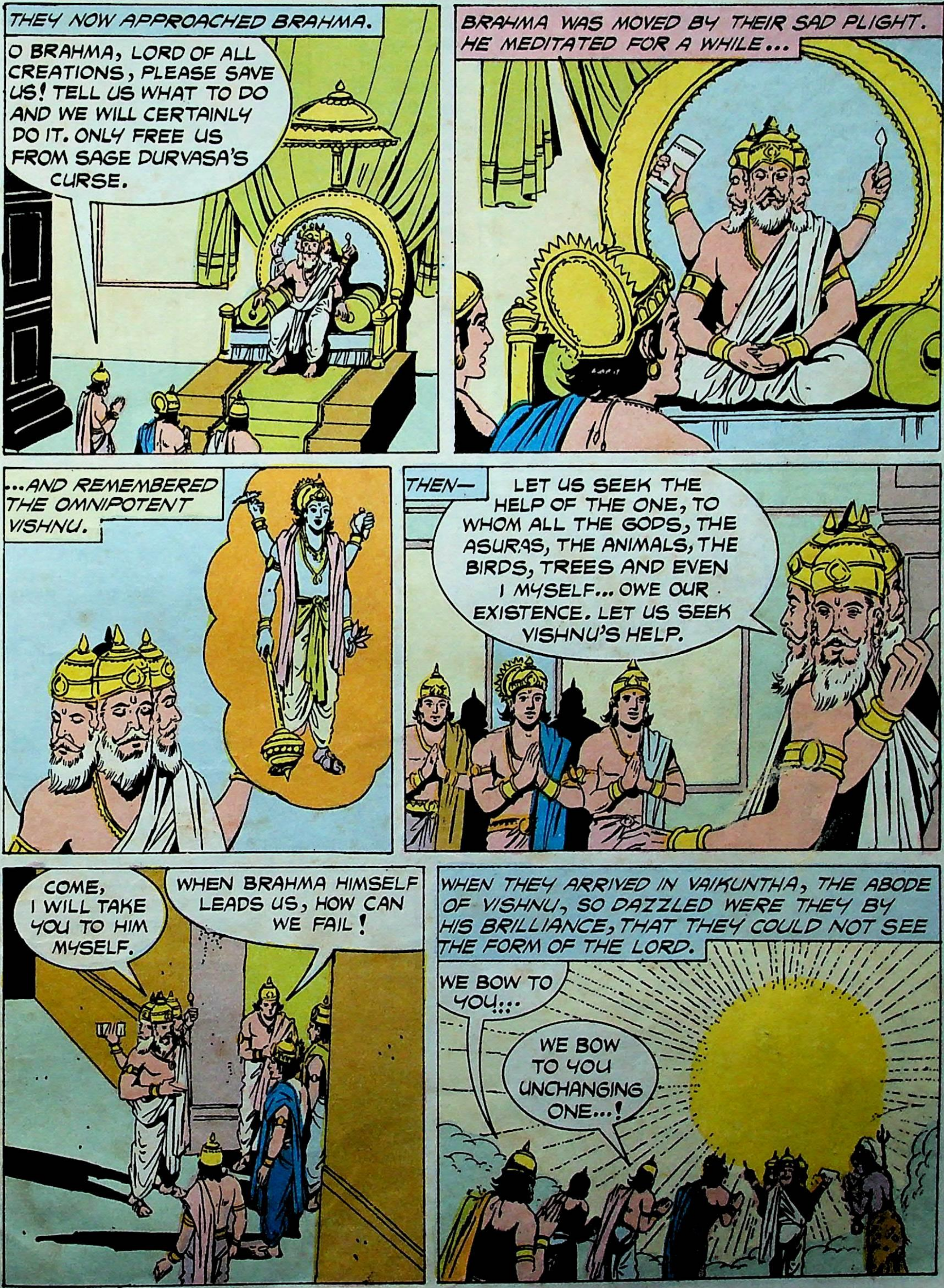

GREAT NUMBERS OF DEVAS WERE FELLED AND COULD NOT RISE AGAIN. THE REST, HEADED BY AGNI, THE GOD OF FIRE, FLED.

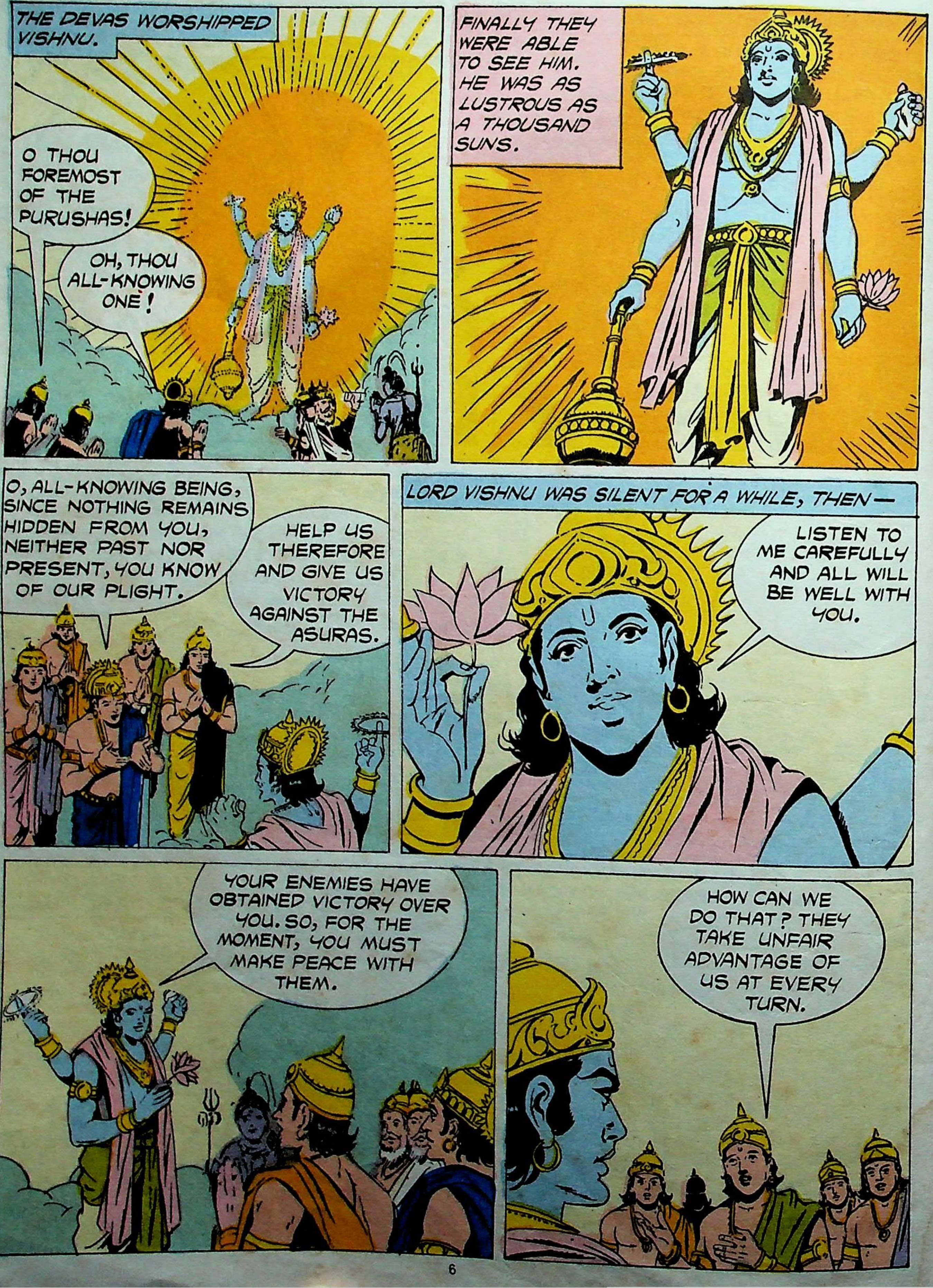

THEY DID NOT STOP TILL THEY CAME TO THE REGIONS OF BRAHMA.

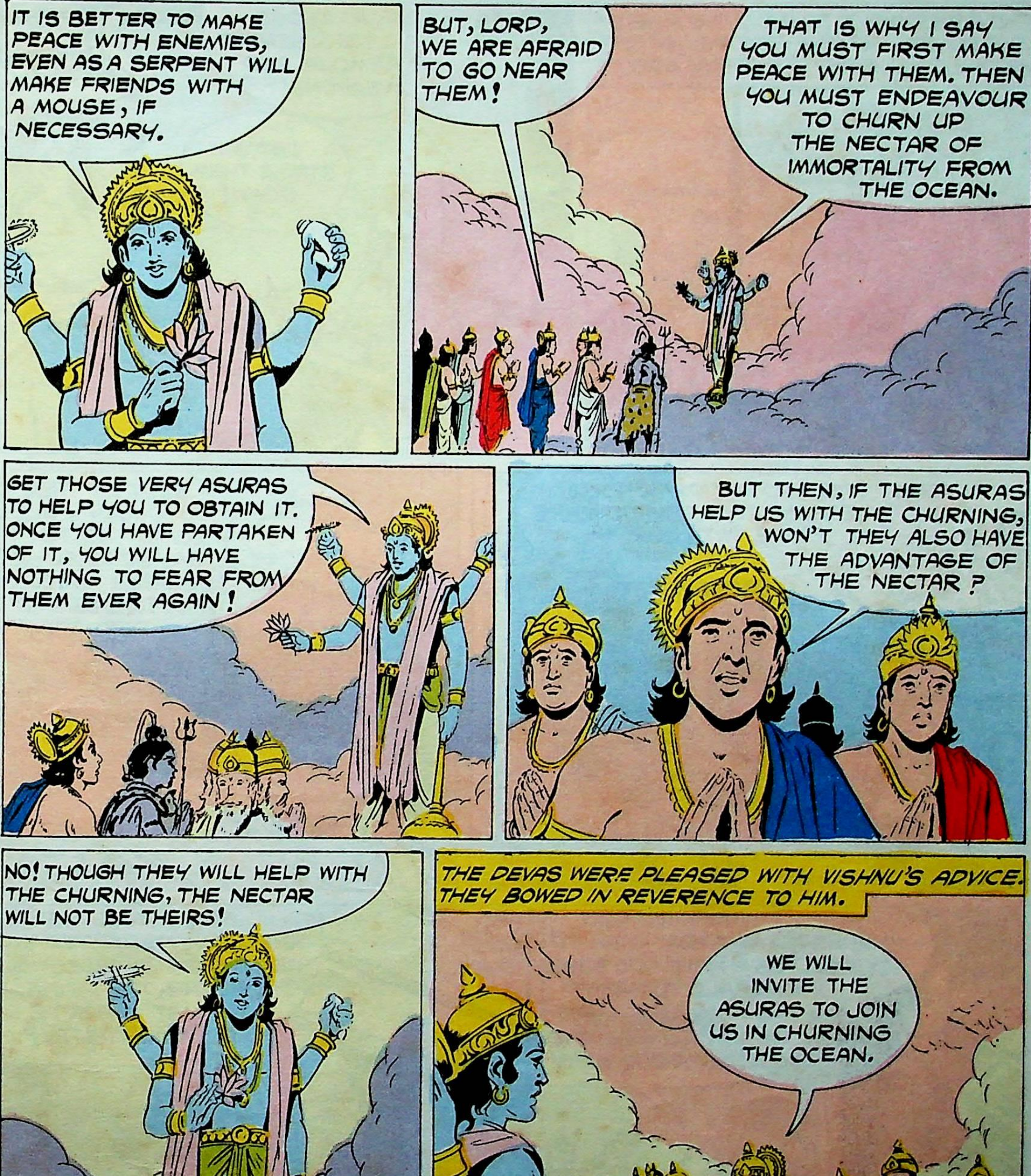
OH, HOW WEAK AND TIRED I FEEL!

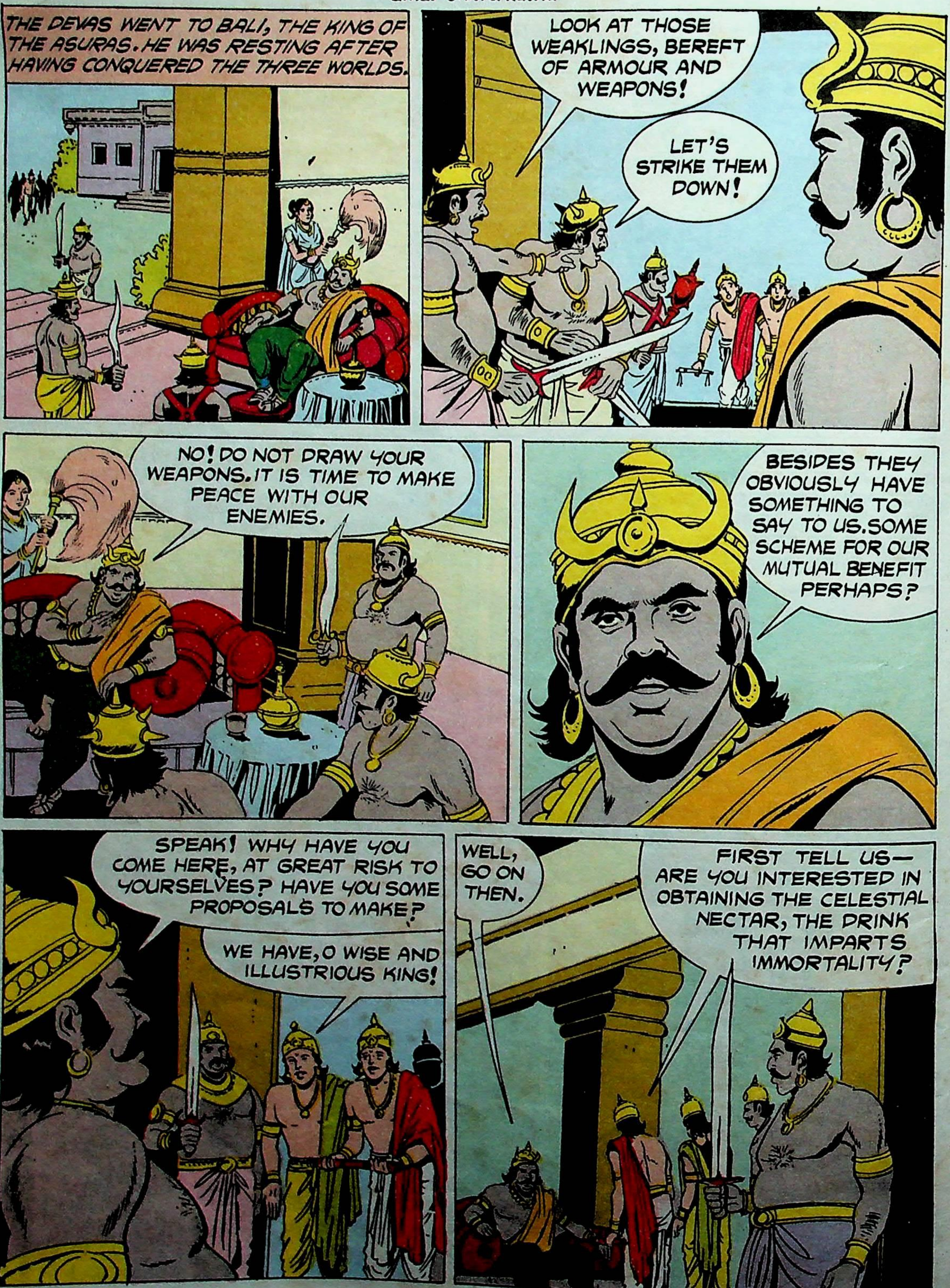

BRAHMA'S COURT WAS ON THE CREST OF THE SHINING MOUNT MERU. IT WAS FULL OF GRACEFUL TREES, FRAGRANT FLOWERS AND COOL STREAMS. BUT THE DEVAS WERE NOT SOOTHED EVEN BY THE SOFT BREEZE.

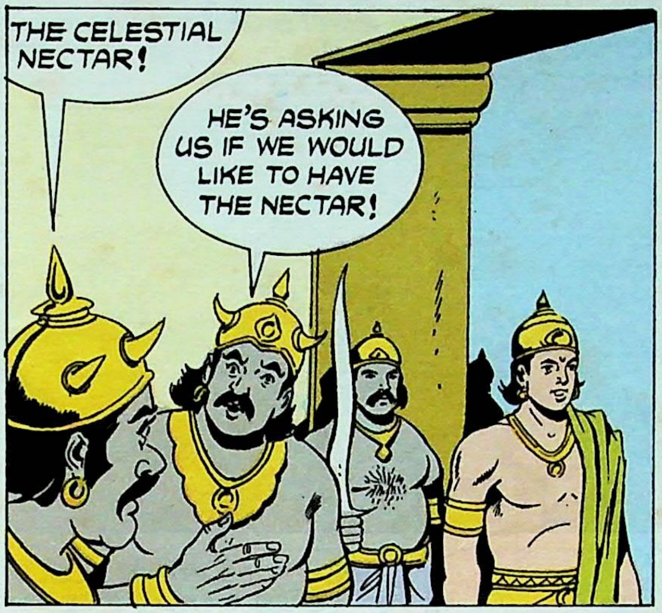
NOTHING INTERESTS ME ANY MORE, NOT EVEN THE MELODIOUS SINGING OF THE BIRDS!

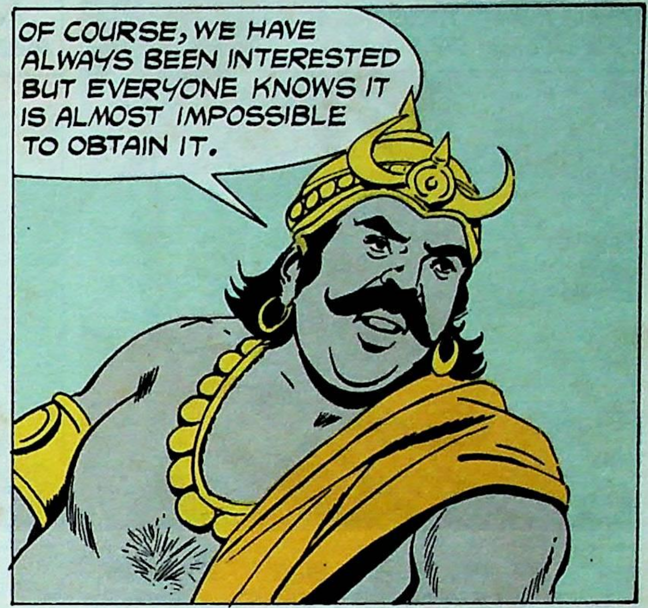

THEY NOW APPROACHED BRAHMA.
O BRAHMA, LORD OF ALL CREATIONS, PLEASE SAVE US! TELL US WHAT TO DO AND WE WILL CERTAINLY DO IT. ONLY FREE US FROM SAGE DURVASA'S CURSE.
BRAHMA WAS MOVED BY THEIR SAD PLIGHT. HE MEDITATED FOR A WHILE...
...AND REMEMBERED THE OMNIPOTENT VISHNU.
THEN—
LET US SEEK THE HELP OF THE ONE, TO WHOM ALL THE GODS, THE ASURAS, THE ANIMALS, THE BIRDS, TREES AND EVEN I MYSELF... OWE OUR EXISTENCE. LET US SEEK VISHNU'S HELP.
COME, I WILL TAKE YOU TO HIM MYSELF.
WHEN BRAHMA HIMSELF LEADS US, HOW CAN WE FAIL!
WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN VAIKUNTHA, THE ABODE OF VISHNU, SO DAZZLED WERE THEY BY HIS BRILLIANCE, THAT THEY COULD NOT SEE THE FORM OF THE LORD.
WE BOW TO YOU...
WE BOW TO YOU UNCHANGING ONE...!

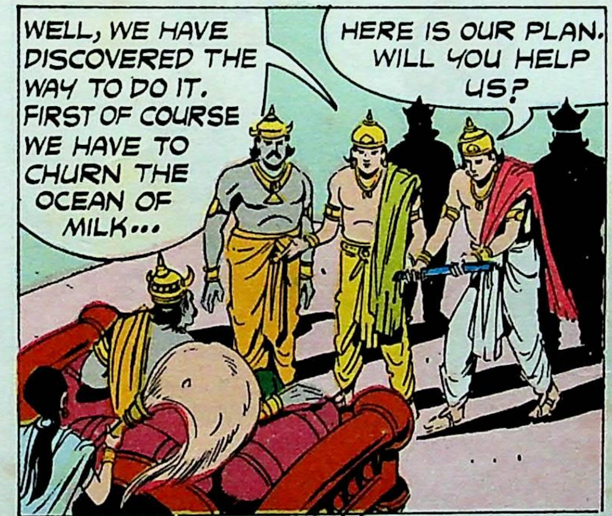

THE DEVAS WORSHIPPED VISHNU.
O THOU FOREMOST OF THE PURUSHAS!
OH, THOU ALL-KNOWING ONE!
FINALLY THEY WERE ABLE TO SEE HIM. HE WAS AS LUSTROUS AS A THOUSAND SUNS.
O, ALL-KNOWING BEING, SINCE NOTHING REMAINS HIDDEN FROM YOU, NEITHER PAST NOR PRESENT, YOU KNOW OF OUR PLIGHT.
HELP US THEREFORE AND GIVE US VICTORY AGAINST THE ASURAS.
LORD VISHNU WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE, THEN—
LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY AND ALL WILL BE WELL WITH YOU.
YOUR ENEMIES HAVE OBTAINED VICTORY OVER YOU. SO, FOR THE MOMENT, YOU MUST MAKE PEACE WITH THEM.
HOW CAN WE DO THAT? THEY TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF US AT EVERY TURN.

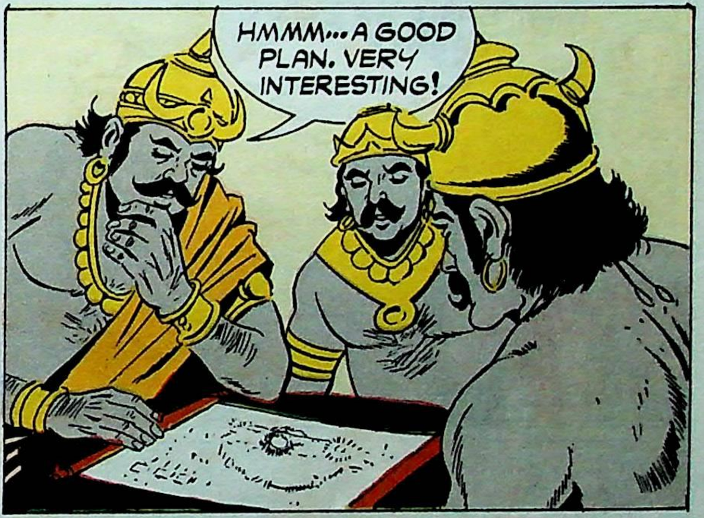

IT IS BETTER TO MAKE PEACE WITH ENEMIES, EVEN AS A SERPENT WILL MAKE FRIENDS WITH A MOUSE, IF NECESSARY.
BUT, LORD, WE ARE AFRAID TO GO NEAR THEM!
THAT IS WHY I SAY YOU MUST FIRST MAKE PEACE WITH THEM. THEN YOU MUST ENDEAVOUR TO CHURN UP THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY FROM THE OCEAN.
GET THOSE VERY ASURAS TO HELP YOU TO OBTAIN IT. ONCE YOU HAVE PARTAKEN OF IT, YOU WILL HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THEM EVER AGAIN!
BUT THEN, IF THE ASURAS HELP US WITH THE CHURNING, WON'T THEY ALSO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF THE NECTAR?
NO! THOUGH THEY WILL HELP WITH THE CHURNING, THE NECTAR WILL NOT BE THEIRS!
THE DEVAS WERE PLEASED WITH VISHNU'S ADVICE. THEY BOWED IN REVERENCE TO HIM.
WE WILL INVITE THE ASURAS TO JOIN US IN CHURNING THE OCEAN.

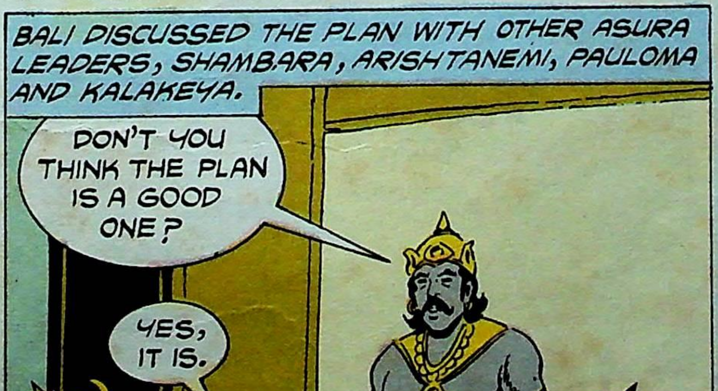

THE DEVAS WENT TO BALI, THE KING OF THE ASURAS. HE WAS RESTING AFTER HAVING CONQUERED THE THREE WORLDS.
LOOK AT THOSE WEAKLINGS, BEREFT OF ARMOUR AND WEAPONS!
LET'S STRIKE THEM DOWN!
NO! DO NOT DRAW YOUR WEAPONS. IT IS TIME TO MAKE PEACE WITH OUR ENEMIES.
BESIDES THEY OBVIOUSLY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO US. SOME SCHEME FOR OUR MUTUAL BENEFIT PERHAPS?
SPEAK! WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE, AT GREAT RISK TO YOURSELVES? HAVE YOU SOME PROPOSALS TO MAKE?
WE HAVE, O WISE AND ILLUSTRIOUS KING!
WELL, GO ON THEN.
FIRST TELL US— ARE YOU INTERESTED IN OBTAINING THE CELESTIAL NECTAR, THE DRINK THAT IMPARTS IMMORTALITY?

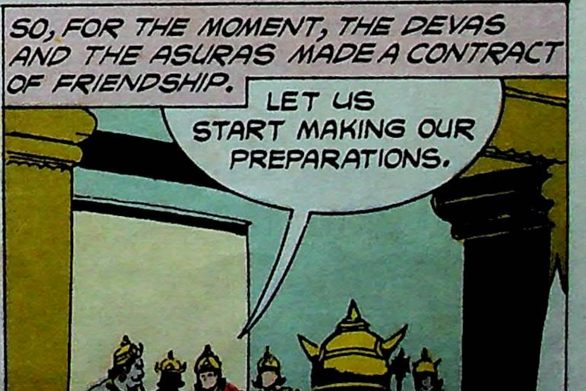

THE CELESTIAL NECTAR!
HE'S ASKING US IF WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE NECTAR!

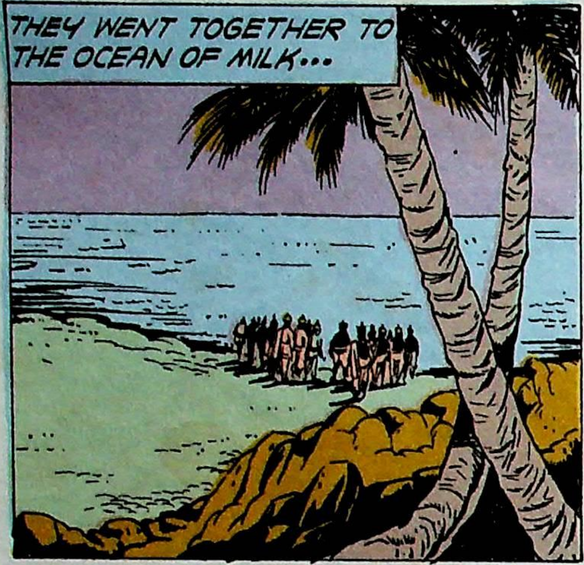

OF COURSE, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED BUT EVERYONE KNOWS IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN IT.

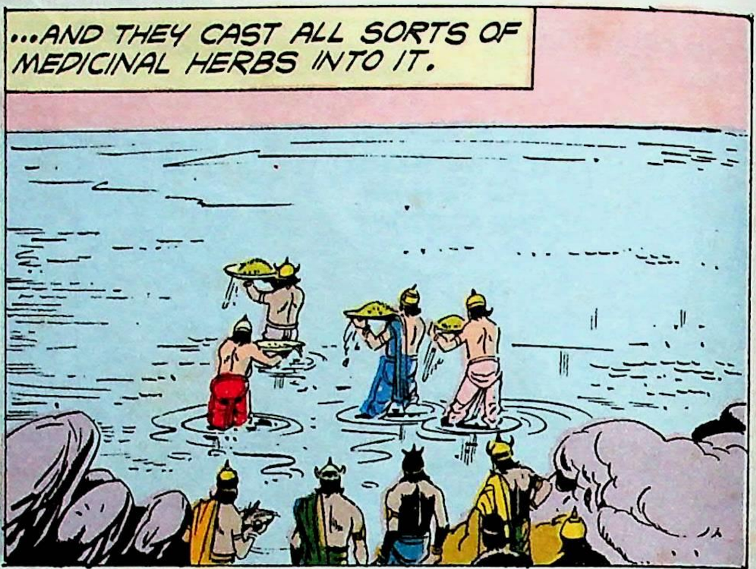

WELL, WE HAVE DISCOVERED THE WAY TO DO IT. FIRST OF COURSE WE HAVE TO CHURN THE OCEAN OF MILK...
HERE IS OUR PLAN. WILL YOU HELP US?

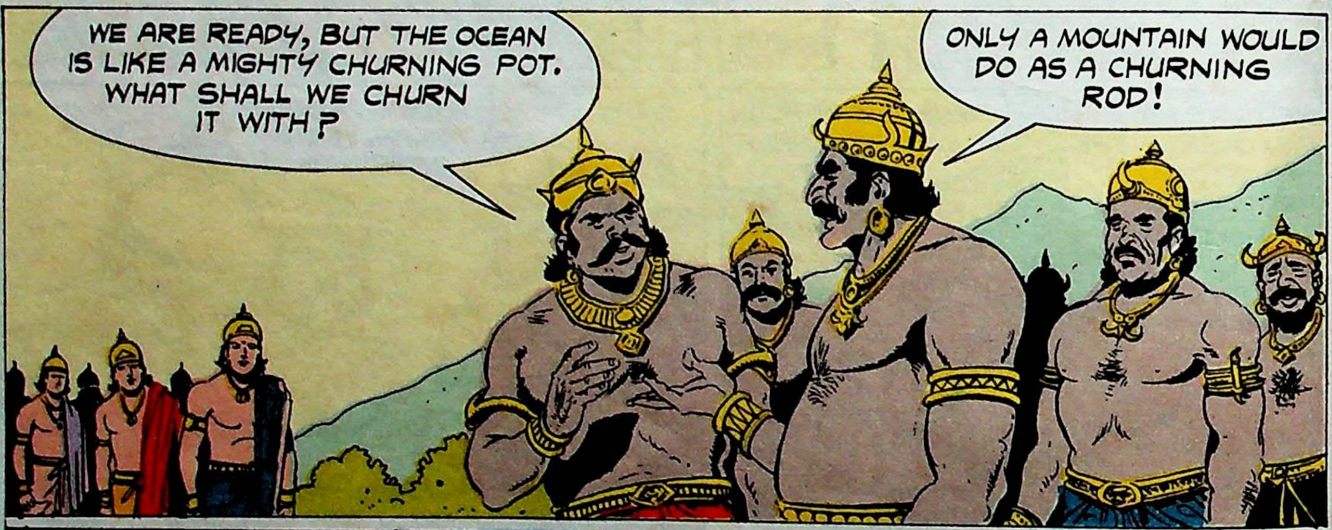

HMMM... A GOOD PLAN. VERY INTERESTING!

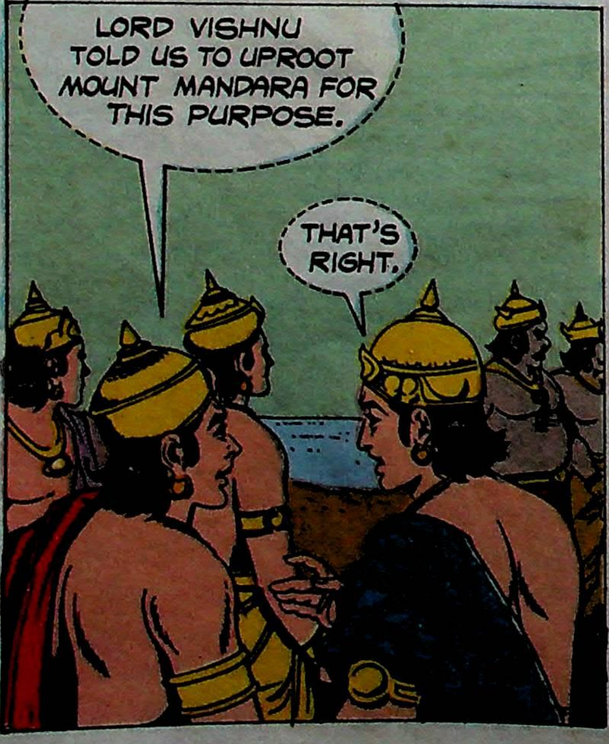

BALI DISCUSSED THE PLAN WITH OTHER ASURA LEADERS, SHAMBARA, ARISHTANEMI, PAULOMA AND KALAKEYA.
DON'T YOU THINK THE PLAN IS A GOOD ONE?
YES, IT IS.

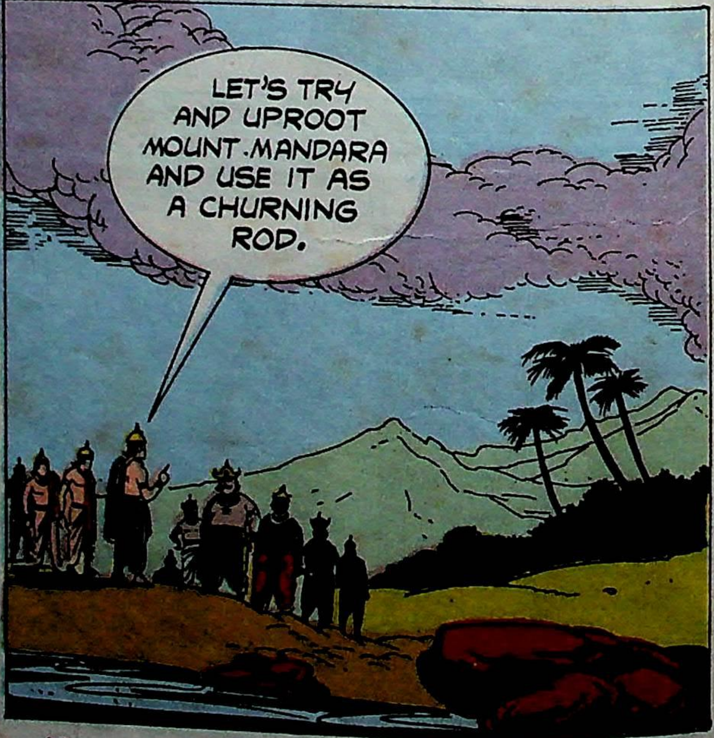

SO, FOR THE MOMENT, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS MADE A CONTRACT OF FRIENDSHIP.
LET US START MAKING OUR PREPARATIONS.

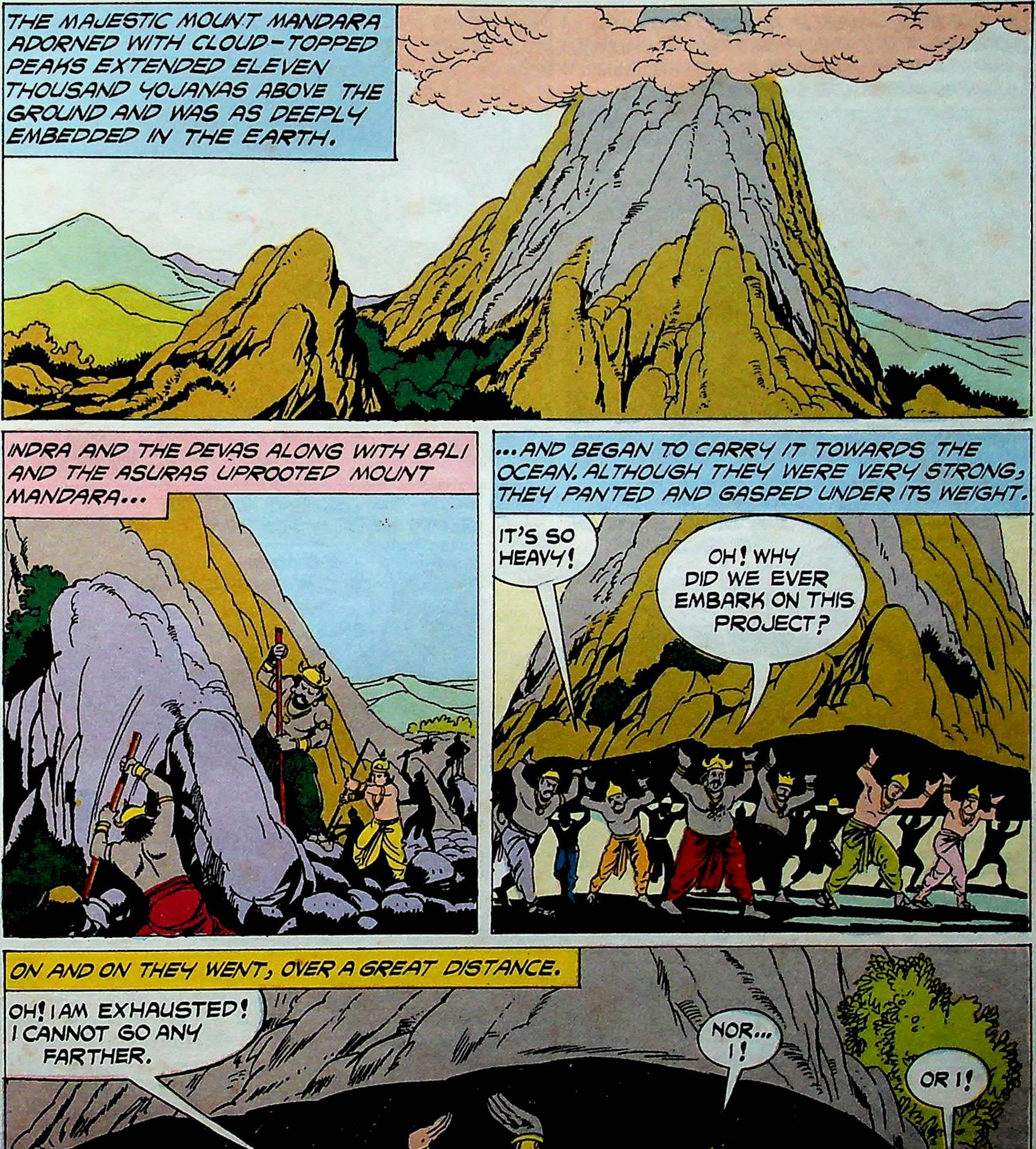

THEY WENT TOGETHER TO THE OCEAN OF MILK...

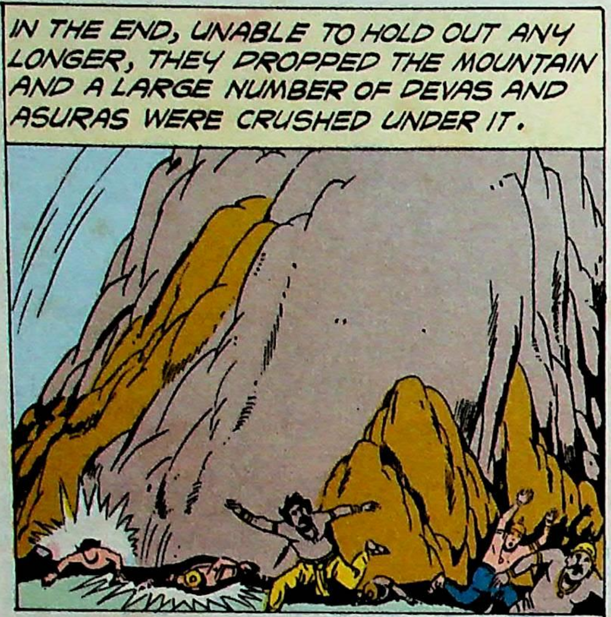

...AND THEY CAST ALL SORTS OF MEDICINAL HERBS INTO IT.


WE ARE READY, BUT THE OCEAN IS LIKE A MIGHTY CHURNING POT. WHAT SHALL WE CHURN IT WITH?
ONLY A MOUNTAIN WOULD DO AS A CHURNING ROD!

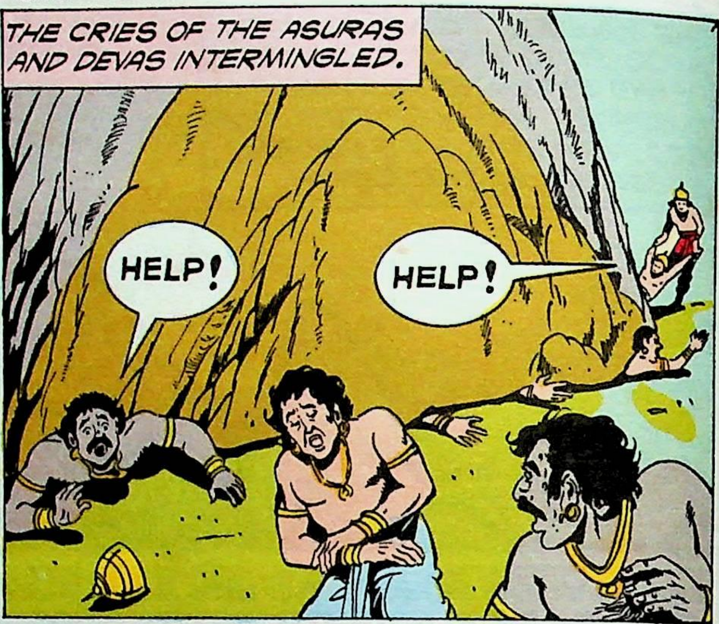

LORD VISHNU TOLD US TO UPROOT MOUNT MANDARA FOR THIS PURPOSE.
THAT'S RIGHT.


LET'S TRY AND UPROOT MOUNT MANDARA AND USE IT AS A CHURNING ROD.

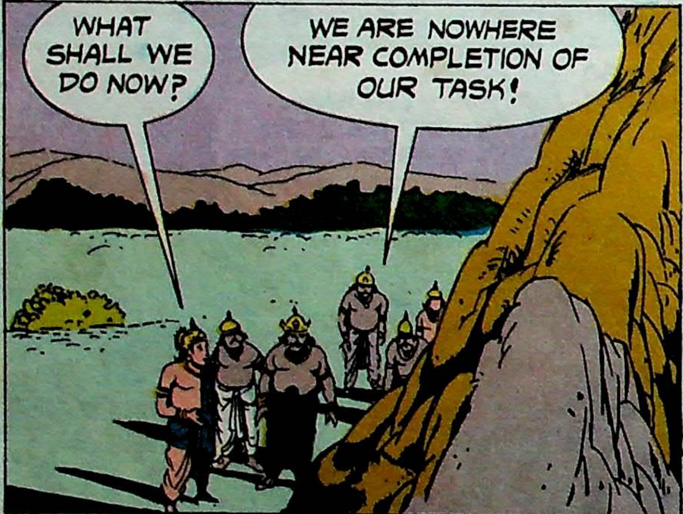

THE MAJESTIC MOUNT MANDARA ADORNED WITH CLOUD-TOPPED PEAKS EXTENDED ELEVEN THOUSAND YOJANAS ABOVE THE GROUND AND WAS AS DEEPLY EMBEDDED IN THE EARTH.
INDRA AND THE DEVAS ALONG WITH BALI AND THE ASURAS UPROOTED MOUNT MANDARA...
...AND BEGAN TO CARRY IT TOWARDS THE OCEAN. ALTHOUGH THEY WERE VERY STRONG, THEY PANTED AND GASPED UNDER ITS WEIGHT.
IT'S SO HEAVY!
OH! WHY DID WE EVER EMBARK ON THIS PROJECT?
ON AND ON THEY WENT, OVER A GREAT DISTANCE.
OH! I AM EXHAUSTED! I CANNOT GO ANY FARTHER.
NOR... I!
OR I!



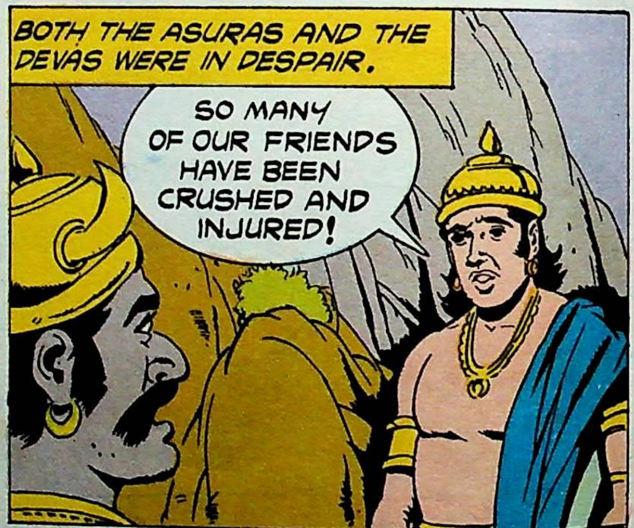
IN THE END, UNABLE TO HOLD OUT ANY LONGER, THEY DROPPED THE MOUNTAIN AND A LARGE NUMBER OF DEVAS AND ASURAS WERE CRUSHED UNDER IT.



THE CRIES OF THE ASURAS AND DEVAS INTERMINGLED.

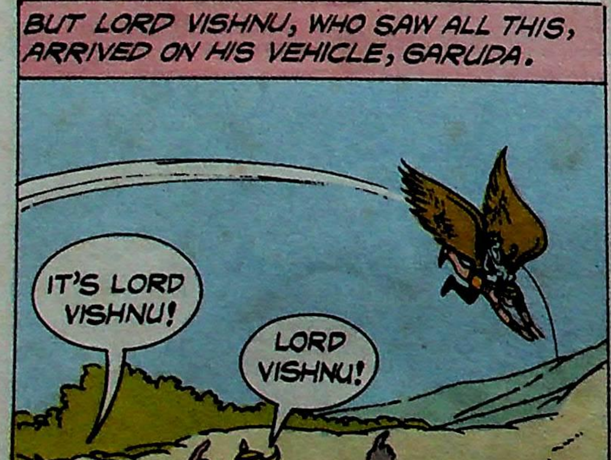


WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?
WE ARE NOWHERE NEAR COMPLETION OF OUR TASK!



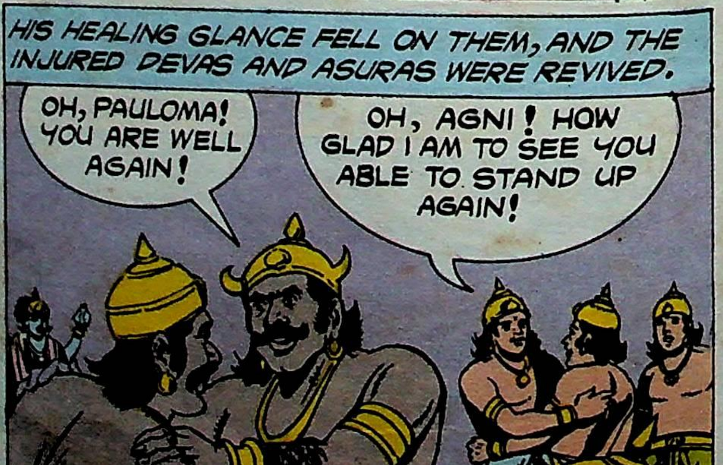
BOTH THE ASURAS AND THE DEVAS WERE IN DESPAIR.

SO MANY OF OUR FRIENDS HAVE BEEN CRUSHED AND INJURED!



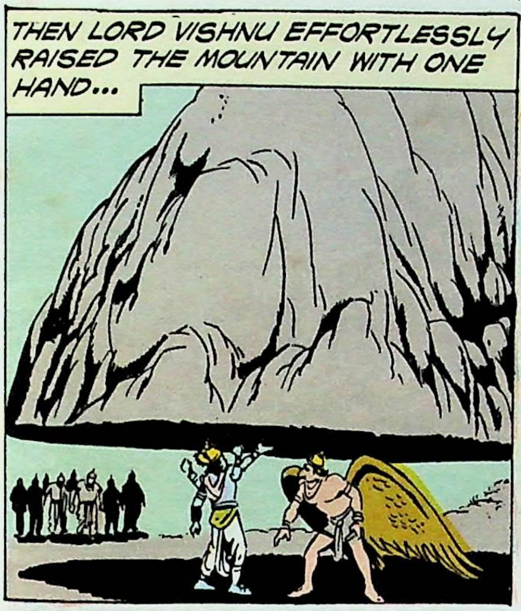
BUT LORD VISHNU, WHO SAW ALL THIS, ARRIVED ON HIS VEHICLE, GARUDA.

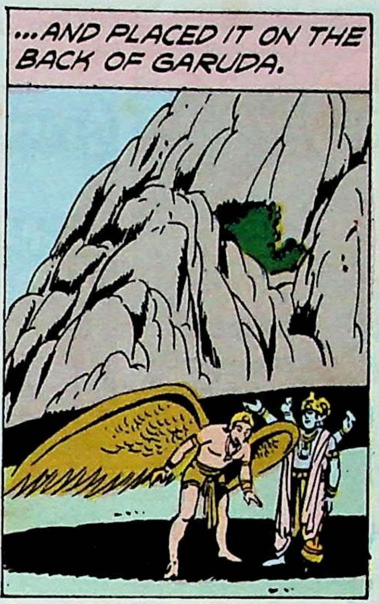
IT'S LORD VISHNU!
LORD VISHNU!

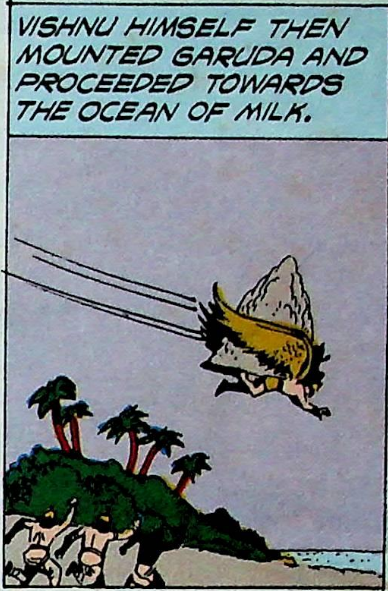


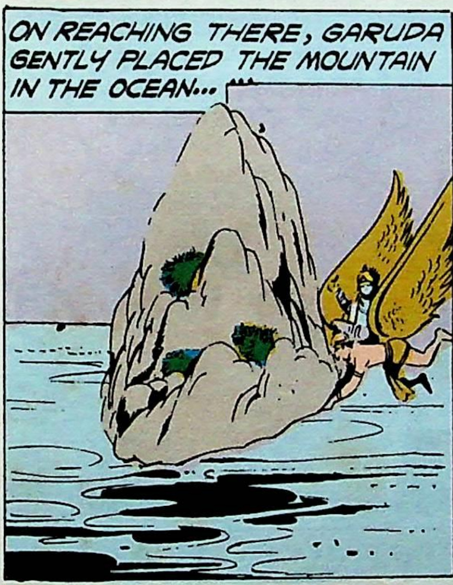
HIS HEALING GLANCE FELL ON THEM, AND THE INJURED DEVAS AND ASURAS WERE REVIVED.

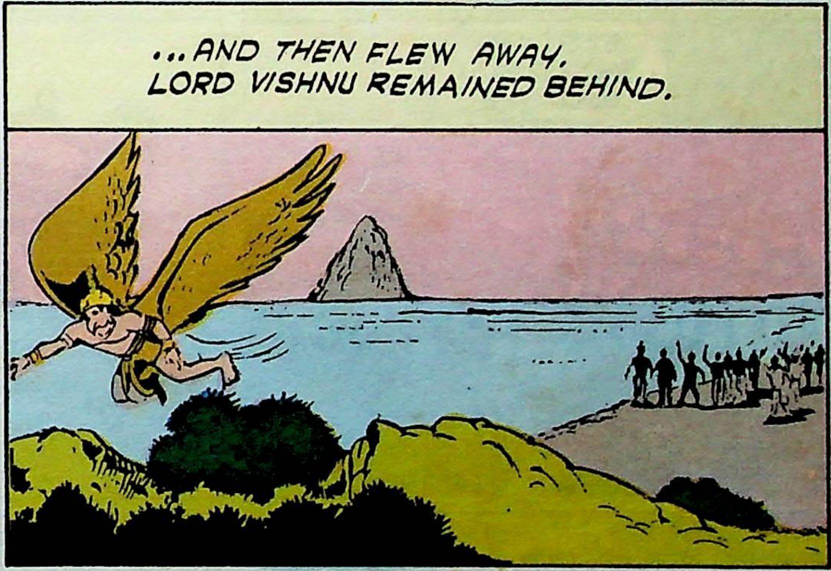
OH, PAULOMA! YOU ARE WELL AGAIN!
OH, AGNI! HOW GLAD I AM TO SEE YOU ABLE TO STAND UP AGAIN!

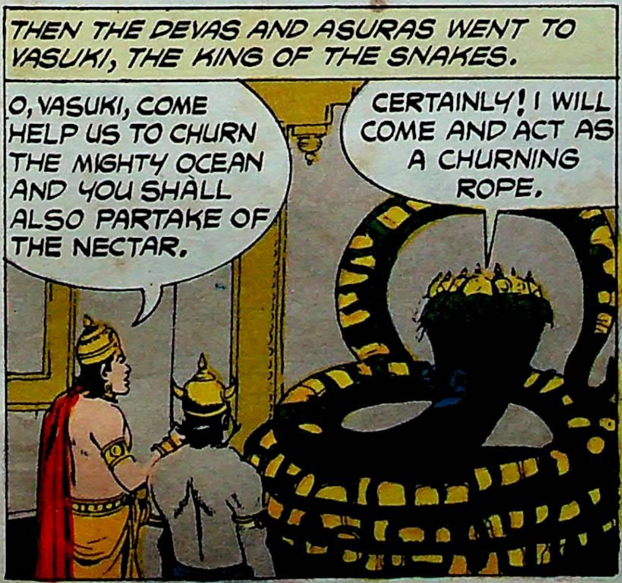

THEN LORD VISHNU EFFORTLESSLY RAISED THE MOUNTAIN WITH ONE HAND...


...AND PLACED IT ON THE BACK OF GARUDA.

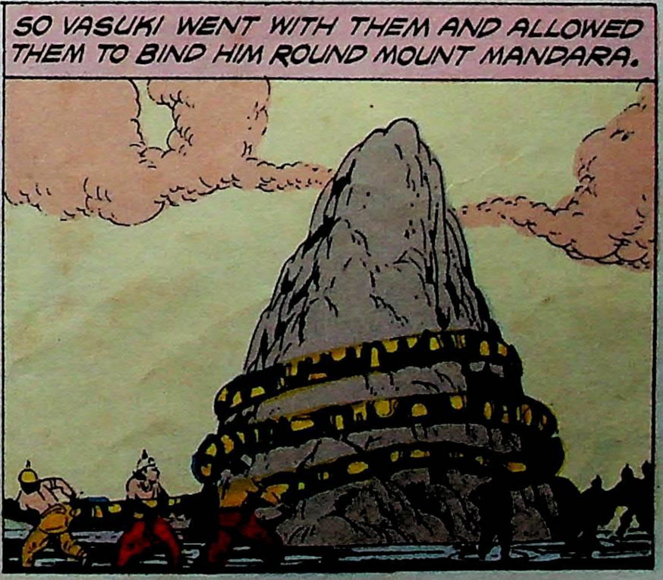

VISHNU HIMSELF THEN MOUNTED GARUDA AND PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE OCEAN OF MILK.

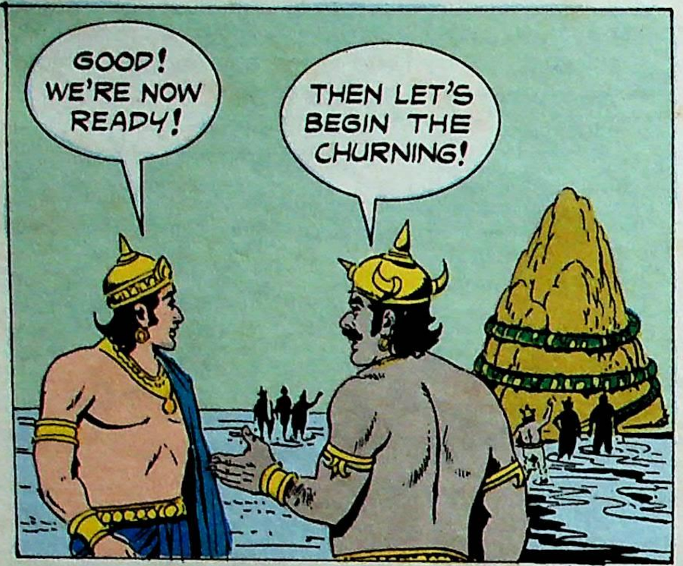

ON REACHING THERE, GARUDA GENTLY PLACED THE MOUNTAIN IN THE OCEAN...


...AND THEN FLEW AWAY. LORD VISHNU REMAINED BEHIND.

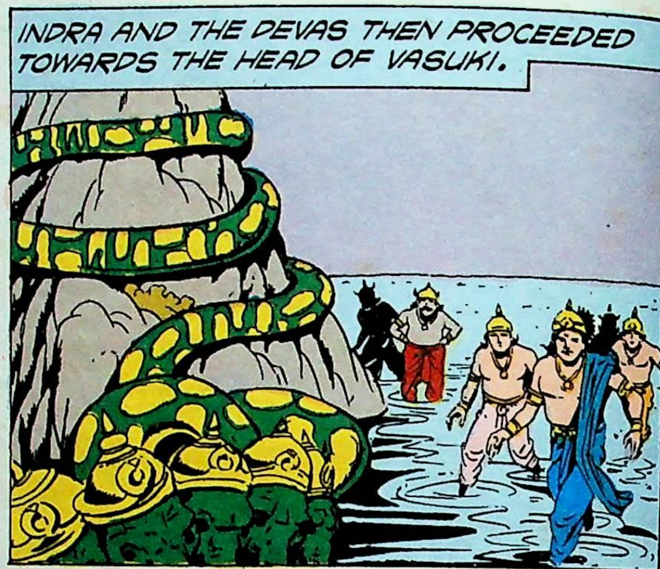

THEN THE DEVAS AND ASURAS WENT TO VASUKI, THE KING OF THE SNAKES.

O, VASUKI, COME HELP US TO CHURN THE MIGHTY OCEAN AND YOU SHALL ALSO PARTAKE OF THE NECTAR.
CERTAINLY! I WILL COME AND ACT AS A CHURNING ROPE.

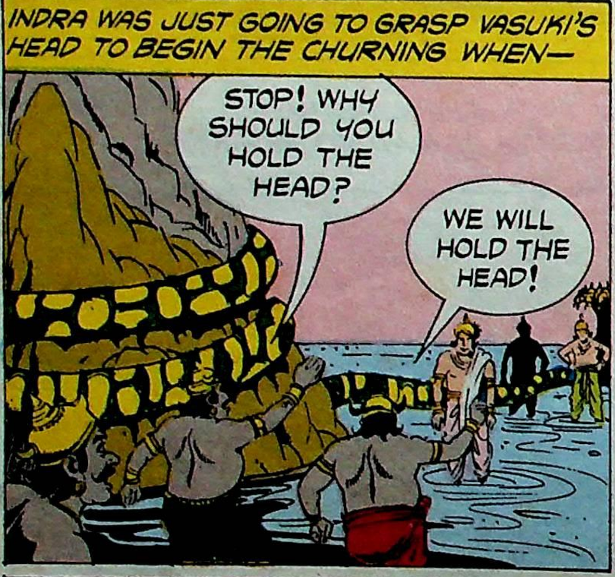

SO VASUKI WENT WITH THEM AND ALLOWED THEM TO BIND HIM ROUND MOUNT MANDARA.


GOOD! WE'RE NOW READY!
THEN LET'S BEGIN THE CHURNING!

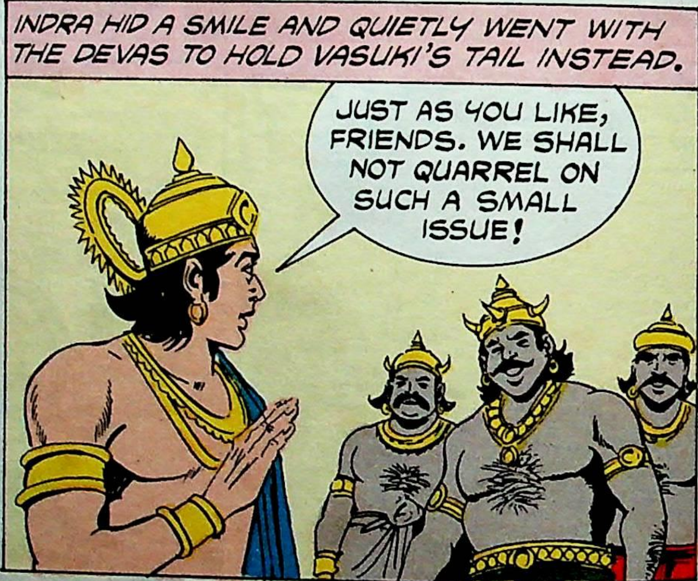
INDRA AND THE DEVAS THEN PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE HEAD OF VASUKI.



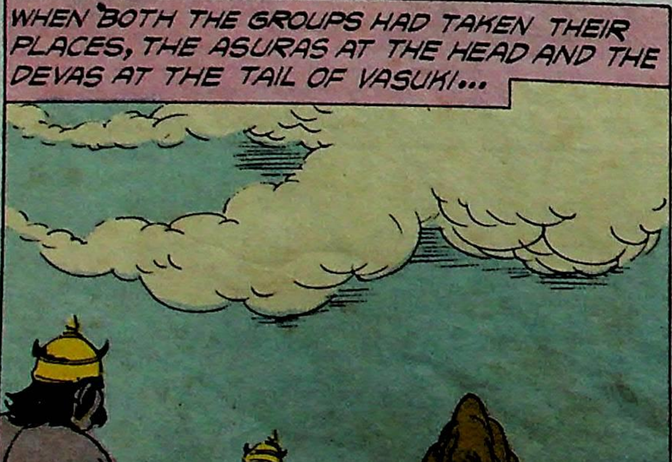
INDRA WAS JUST GOING TO GRASP VASUKI'S HEAD TO BEGIN THE CHURNING WHEN—


STOP! WHY SHOULD YOU HOLD THE HEAD?
WE WILL HOLD THE HEAD!

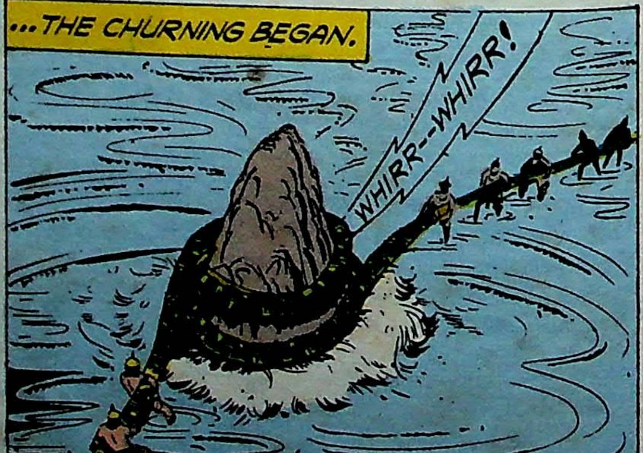
INDRA HID A SMILE AND QUIETLY WENT WITH THE DEVAS TO HOLD VASUKI'S TAIL INSTEAD.

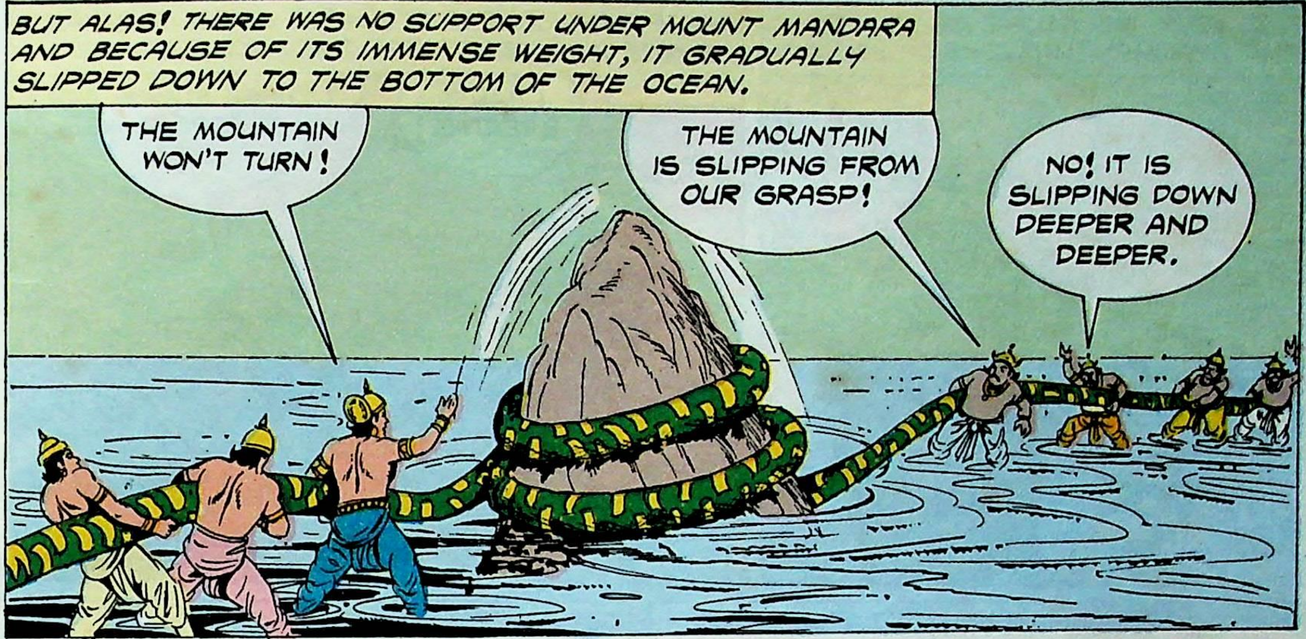

JUST AS YOU LIKE, FRIENDS. WE SHALL NOT QUARREL ON SUCH A SMALL ISSUE!

WHEN BOTH THE GROUPS HAD TAKEN THEIR PLACES, THE ASURAS AT THE HEAD AND THE DEVAS AT THE TAIL OF VASUKI...



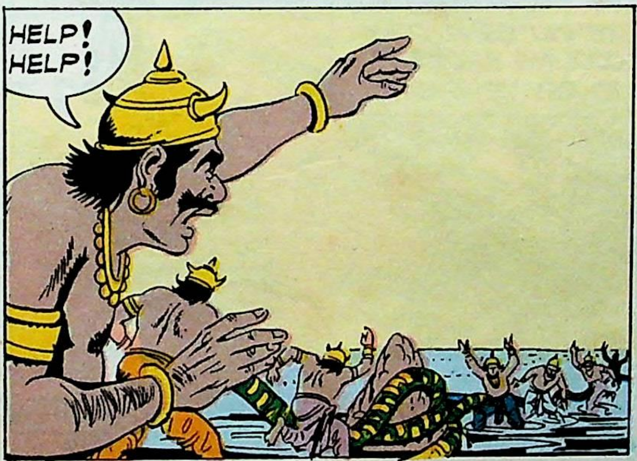
...THE CHURNING BEGAN.

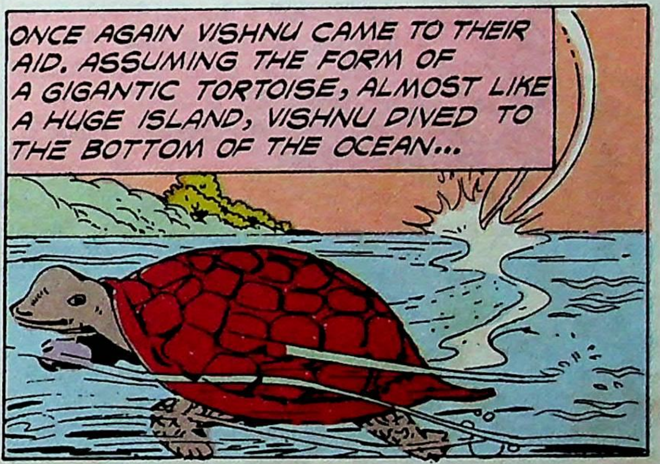

WHIRR--WHIRR!



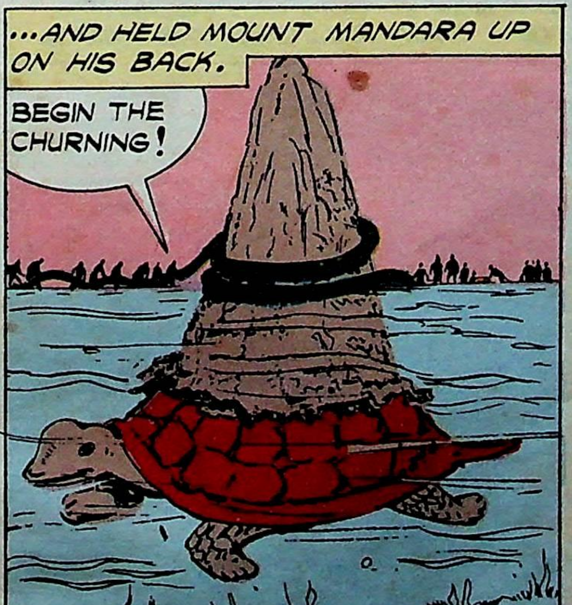
BUT ALAS! THERE WAS NO SUPPORT UNDER MOUNT MANDARA AND BECAUSE OF ITS IMMENSE WEIGHT, IT GRADUALLY SLIPPED DOWN TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.

THE MOUNTAIN WON'T TURN!
THE MOUNTAIN IS SLIPPING FROM OUR GRASP!
NO! IT IS SLIPPING DOWN DEEPER AND DEEPER.



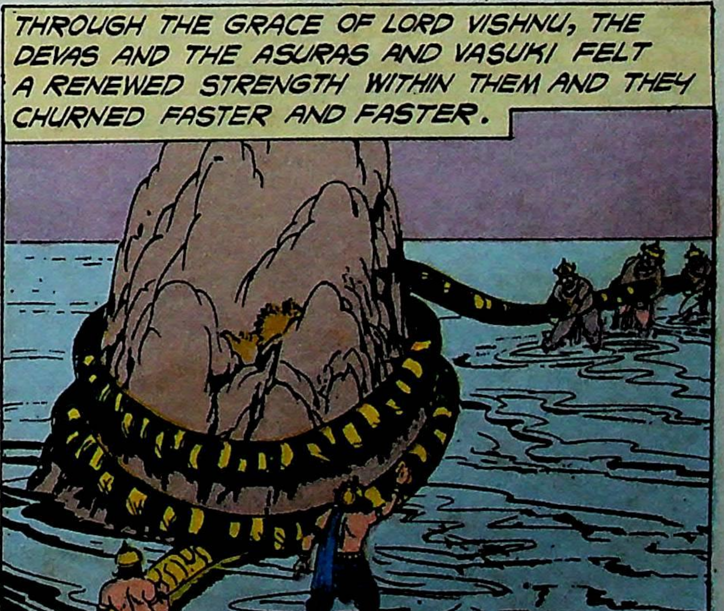


ONCE AGAIN VISHNU CAME TO THEIR AID. ASSUMING THE FORM OF A GIGANTIC TORTOISE, ALMOST LIKE A HUGE ISLAND, VISHNU DIVED TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN...

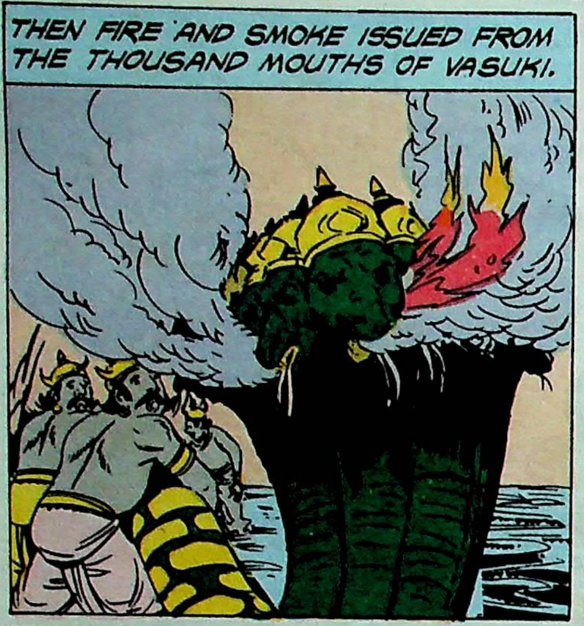


...AND HELD MOUNT MANDARA UP ON HIS BACK.

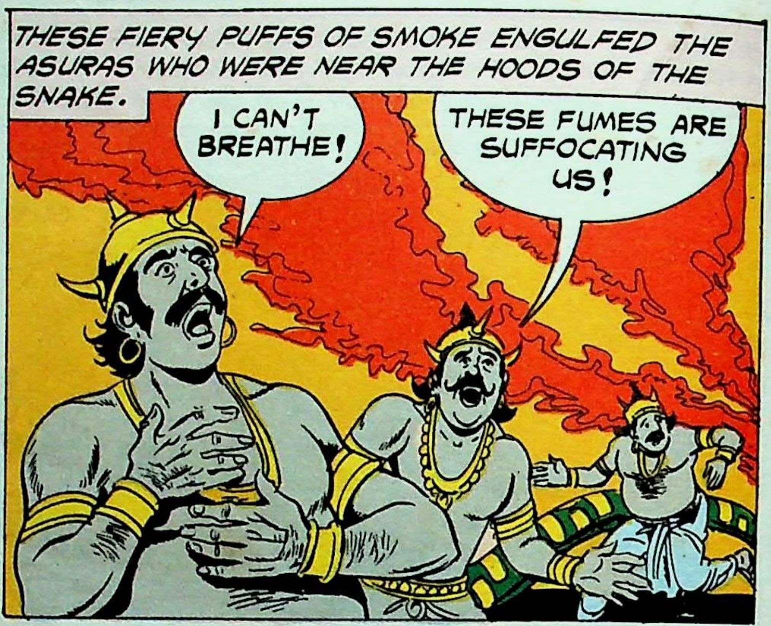
BEGIN THE CHURNING!



THROUGH THE GRACE OF LORD VISHNU, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS AND VASUKI FELT A RENEWED STRENGTH WITHIN THEM AND THEY CHURNED FASTER AND FASTER.

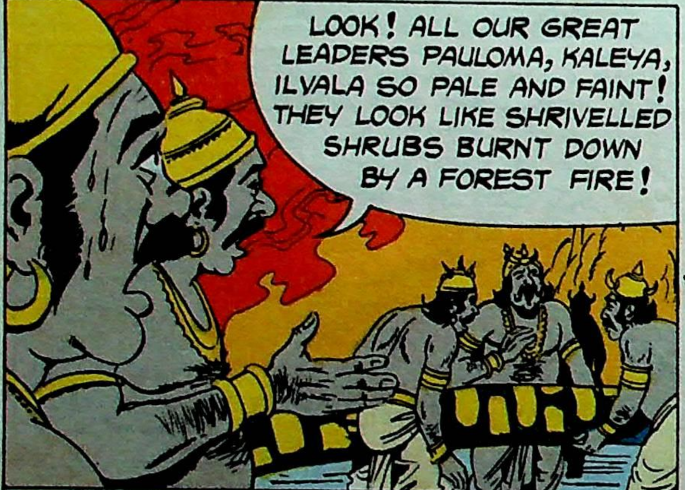


THEN FIRE AND SMOKE ISSUED FROM THE THOUSAND MOUTHS OF VASUKI.

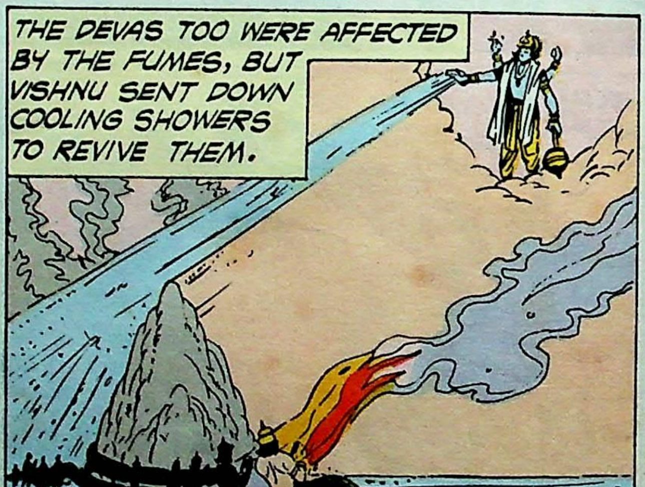


THESE FIERY PUFFS OF SMOKE ENGULFED THE ASURAS WHO WERE NEAR THE HOODS OF THE SNAKE.

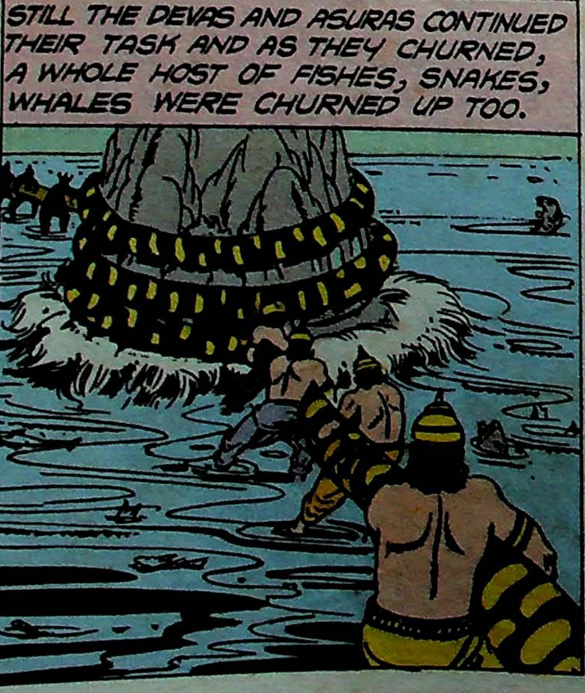
I CAN'T BREATHE!
THESE FUMES ARE SUFFOCATING US!



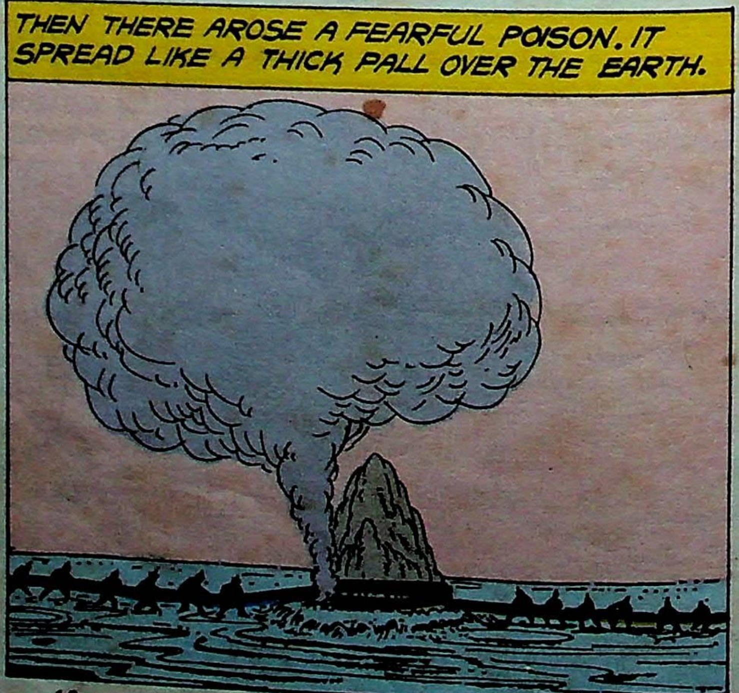
LOOK! ALL OUR GREAT LEADERS PAULOMA, KALEYA, ILVALA SO PALE AND FAINT! THEY LOOK LIKE SHRIVELLED SHRUBS BURNT DOWN BY A FOREST FIRE!



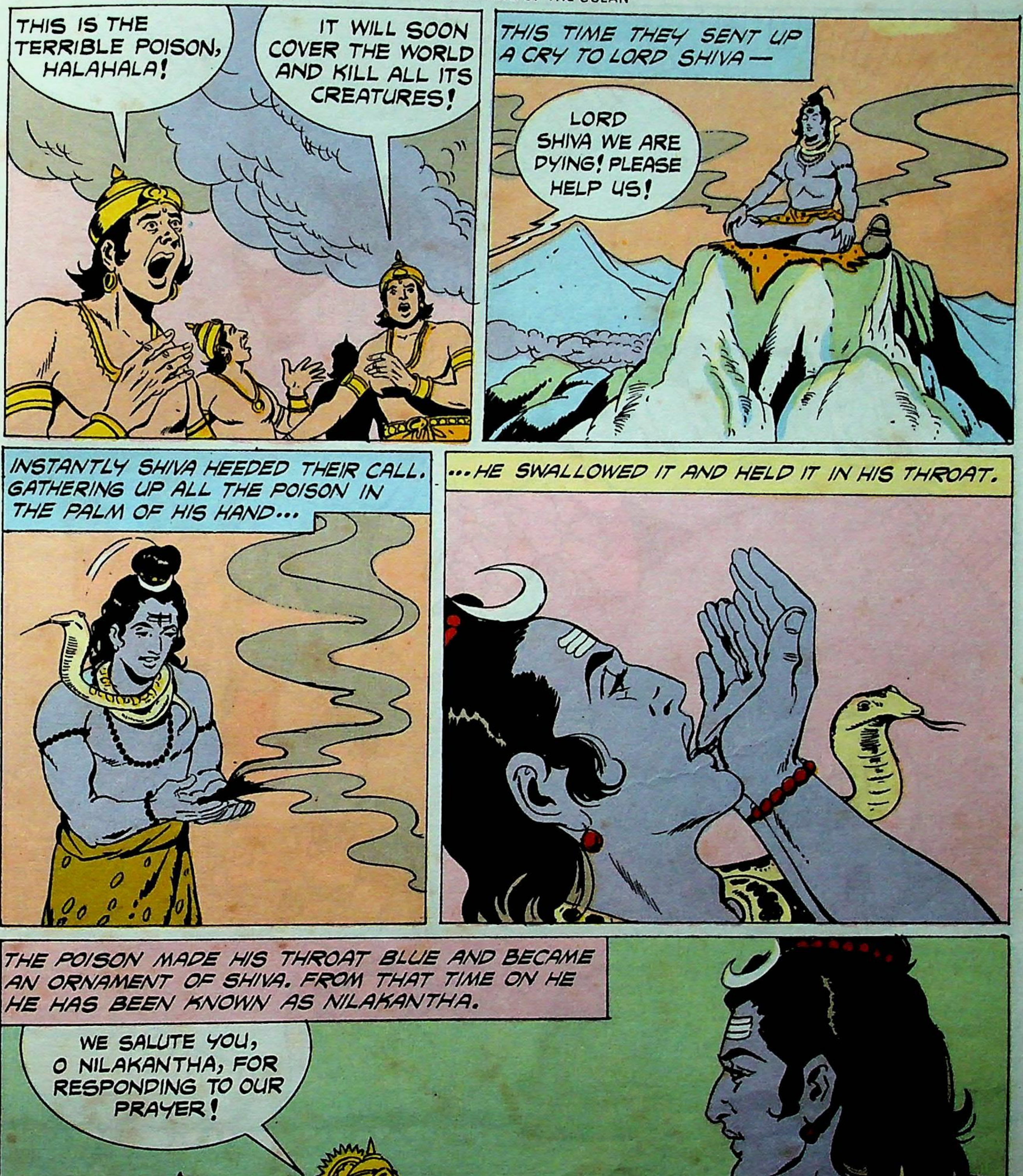
THE DEVAS TOO WERE AFFECTED BY THE FUMES, BUT VISHNU SENT DOWN COOLING SHOWERS TO REVIVE THEM.

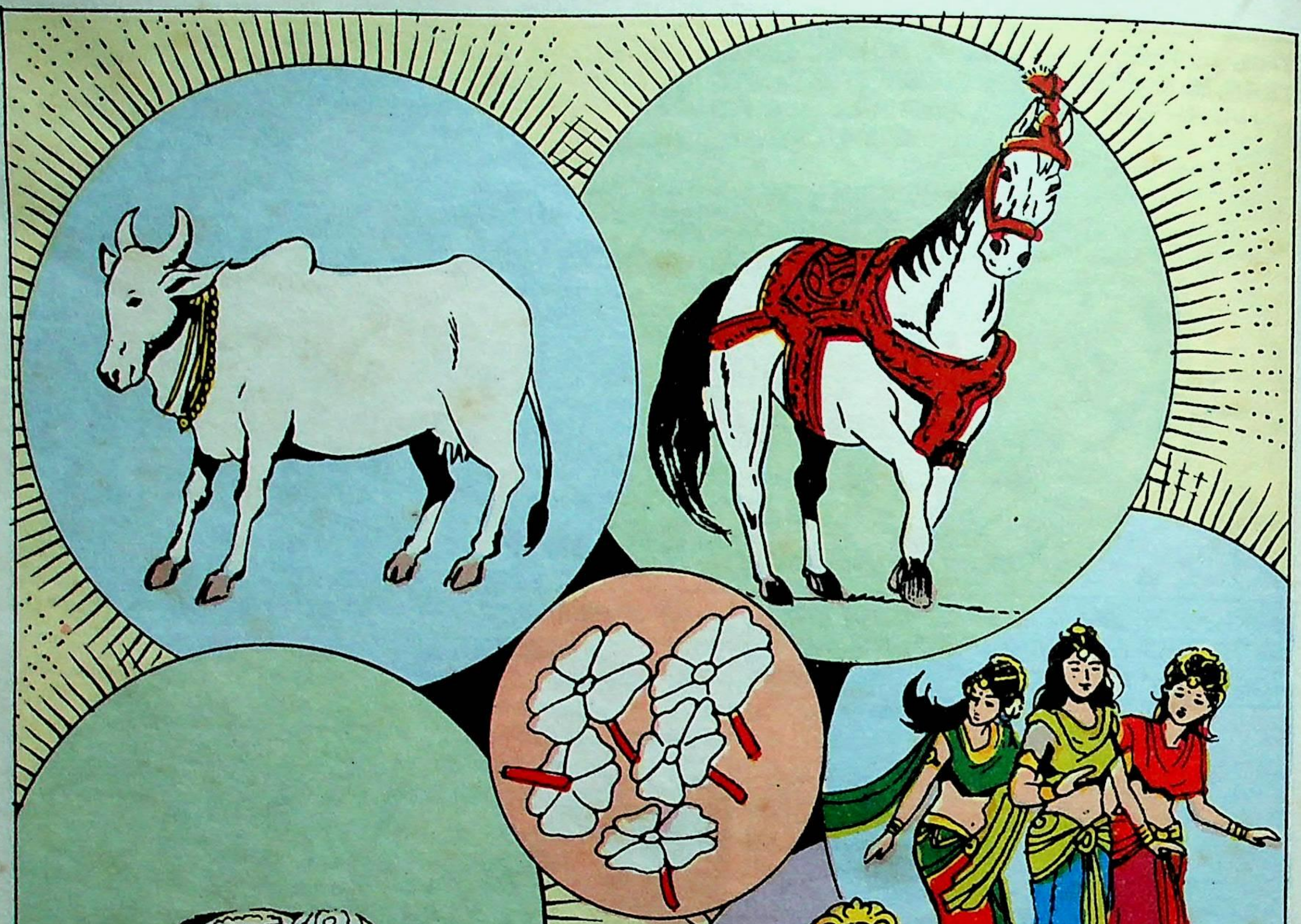


STILL THE DEVAS AND ASURAS CONTINUED THEIR TASK AND AS THEY CHURNED, A WHOLE HOST OF FISHES, SNAKES, WHALES WERE CHURNED UP TOO.

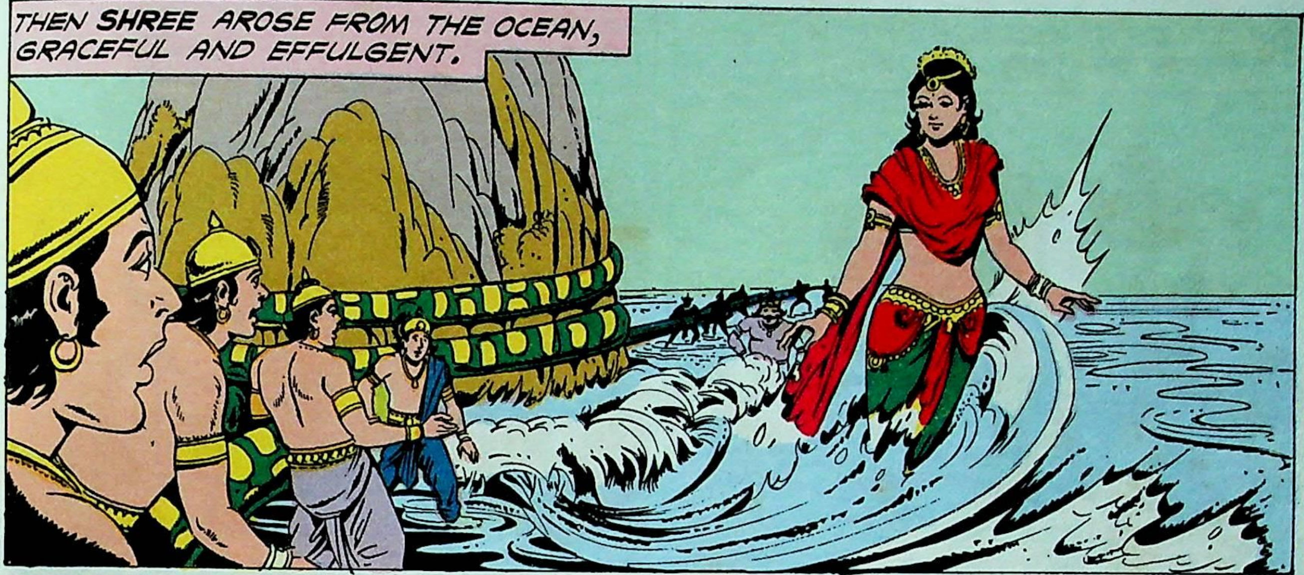


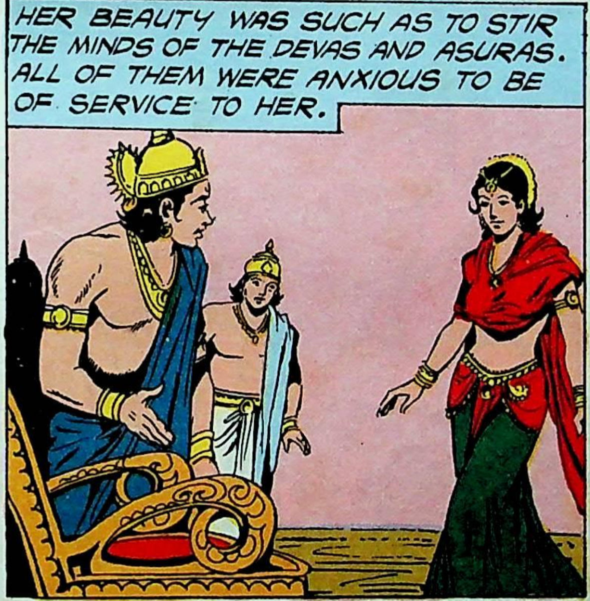
THEN THERE AROSE A FEARFUL POISON. IT SPREAD LIKE A THICK PALL OVER THE EARTH.

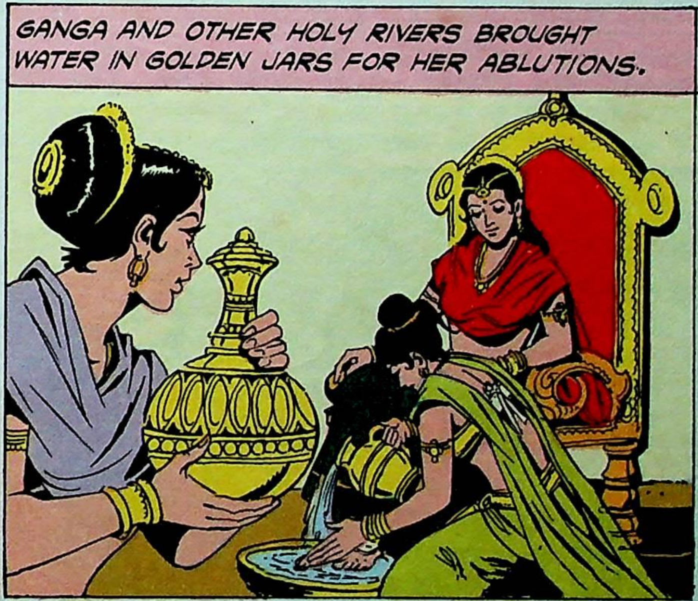

THIS IS THE TERRIBLE POISON, HALAHALA!
IT WILL SOON COVER THE WORLD AND KILL ALL ITS CREATURES!
THIS TIME THEY SENT UP A CRY TO LORD SHIVA —
LORD SHIVA WE ARE DYING! PLEASE HELP US!
INSTANTLY SHIVA HEEDED THEIR CALL. GATHERING UP ALL THE POISON IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND...
...HE SWALLOWED IT AND HELD IT IN HIS THROAT.
THE POISON MADE HIS THROAT BLUE AND BECAME AN ORNAMENT OF SHIVA. FROM THAT TIME ON HE HE HAS BEEN KNOWN AS NILAKANTHA.
WE SALUTE YOU, O NILAKANTHA, FOR RESPONDING TO OUR PRAYER!

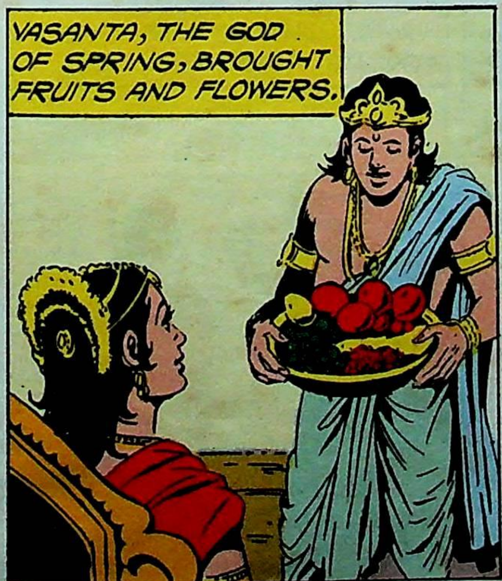


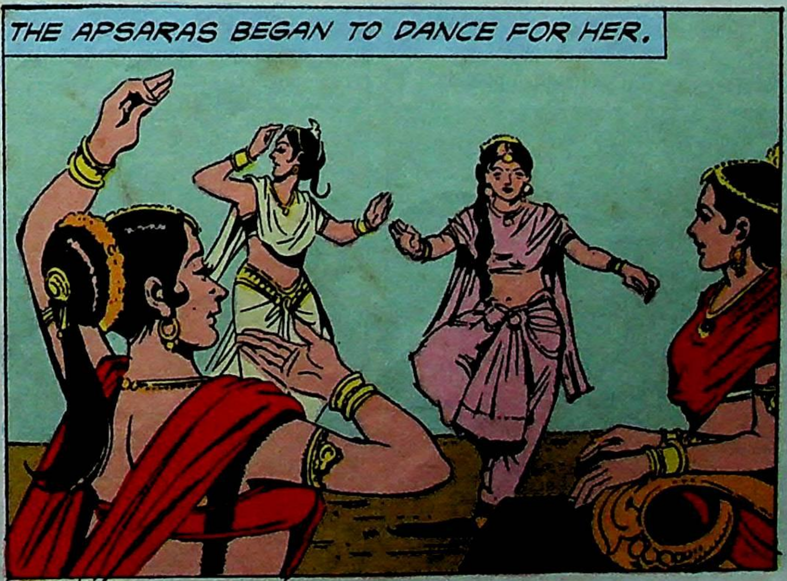
THE DEVAS AND ASURAS RESUMED THEIR CHURNING. BEFORE LONG THERE AROSE FROM THE OCEAN SURABHI, THE DIVINE COW, UCHCHHAISHRAVA, THE HORSE WHITE AS THE MOON AND AIRAVATA, THE WHITE ELEPHANT WITH FOUR TUSKS. THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY A BEVY OF BEAUTIFUL APSARAS. LATER EMERGED THE CELESTIAL PARIJATA TREE AND VARUNI THE GODDESS OF WINE, ROLLING HER INTOXICATING EYES.

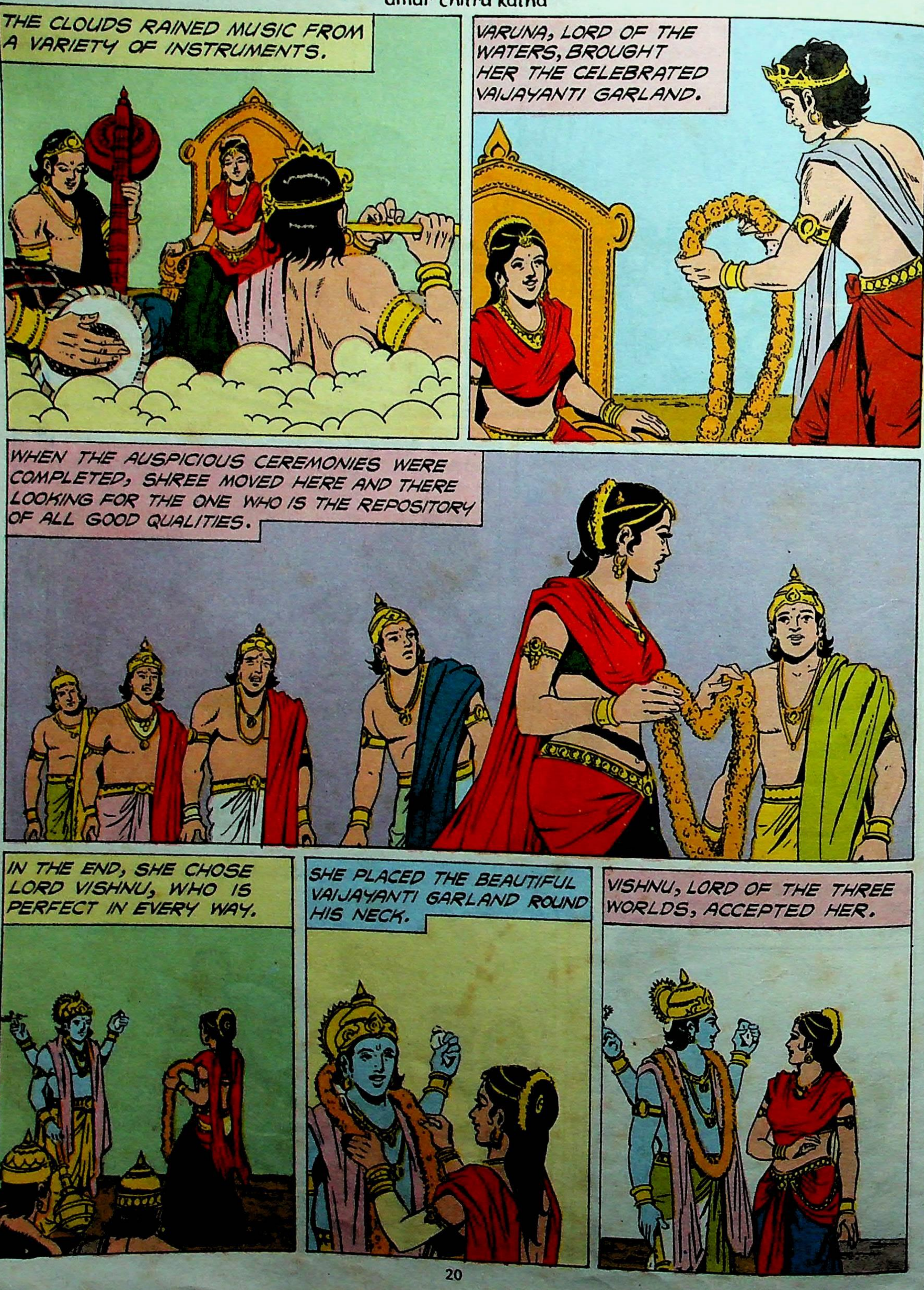

THEN **SHREE** AROSE FROM THE OCEAN, GRACEFUL AND EFFULGENT.


HER BEAUTY WAS SUCH AS TO STIR THE MINDS OF THE DEVAS AND ASURAS. ALL OF THEM WERE ANXIOUS TO BE OF SERVICE TO HER.


GANGA AND OTHER HOLY RIVERS BROUGHT WATER IN GOLDEN JARS FOR HER ABLUTIONS.


VASANTA, THE GOD OF SPRING, BROUGHT FRUITS AND FLOWERS.


THE APSARAS BEGAN TO DANCE FOR HER.



THE CLOUDS RAINED MUSIC FROM A VARIETY OF INSTRUMENTS.

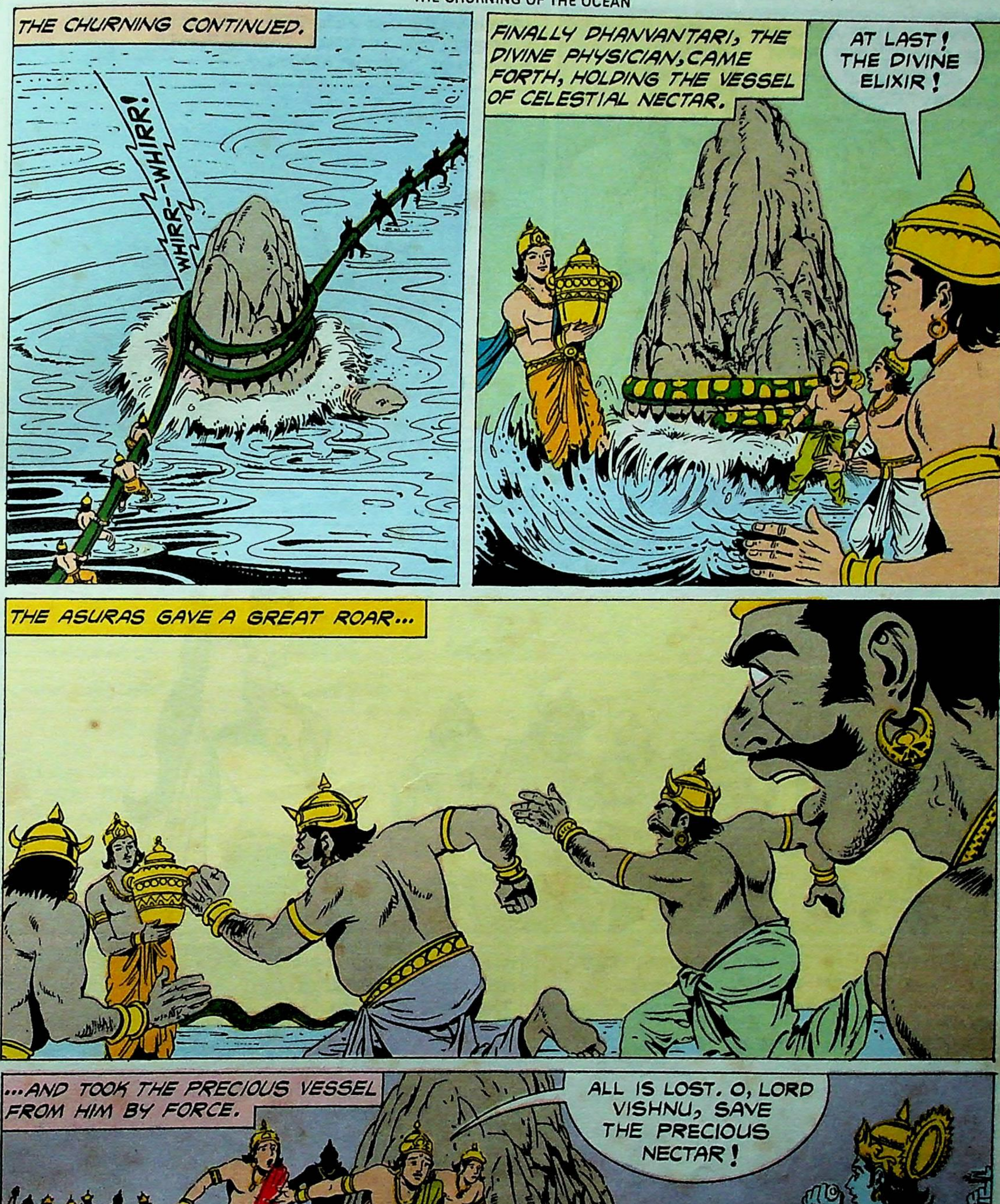
VARUNA, LORD OF THE WATERS, BROUGHT HER THE CELEBRATED VAIJAYANTI GARLAND.

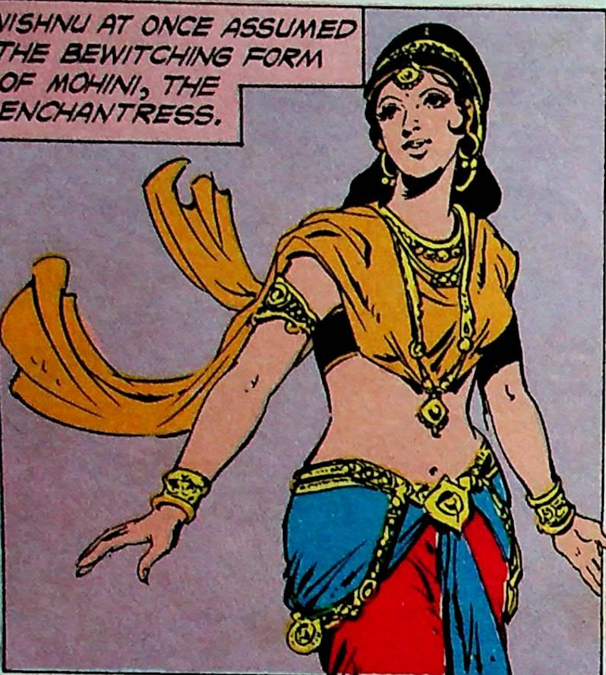
WHEN THE AUSPICIOUS CEREMONIES WERE COMPLETED, SHREE MOVED HERE AND THERE LOOKING FOR THE ONE WHO IS THE REPOSITORY OF ALL GOOD QUALITIES.

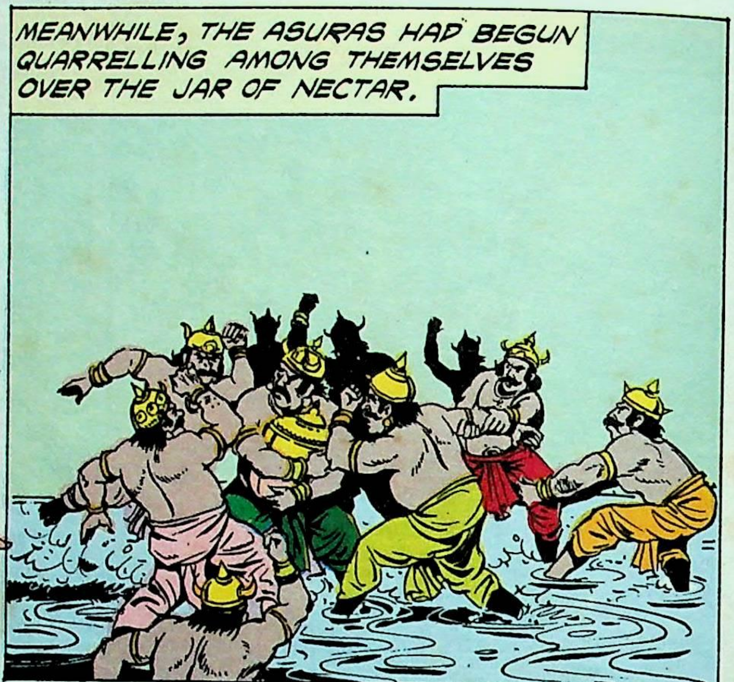
IN THE END, SHE CHOSE LORD VISHNU, WHO IS PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.

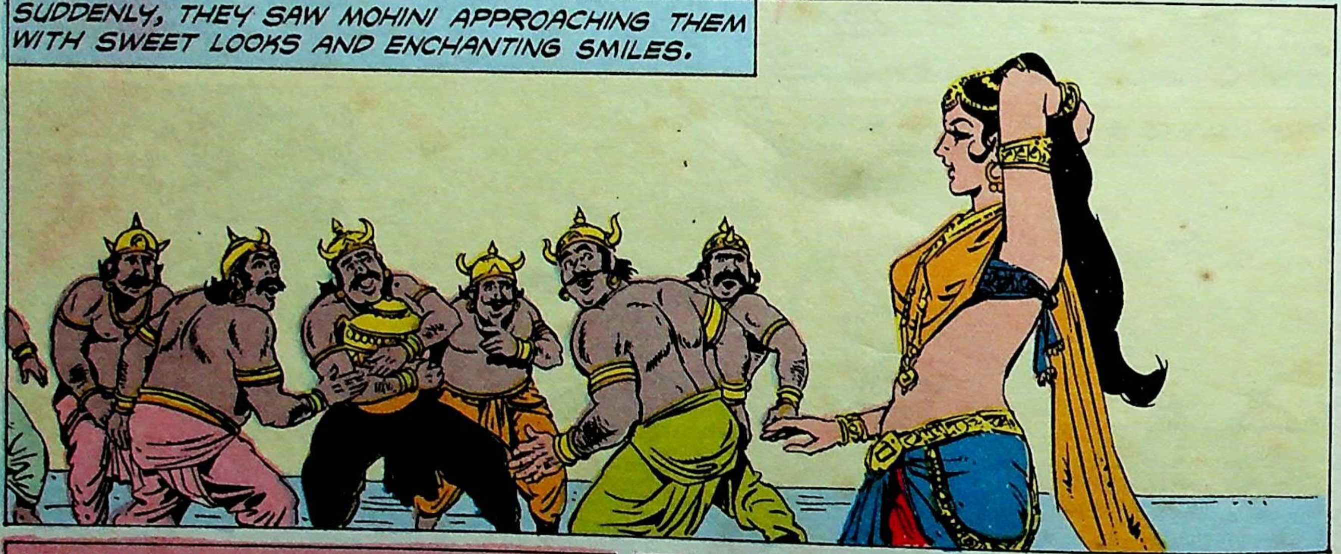
SHE PLACED THE BEAUTIFUL VAIJAYANTI GARLAND ROUND HIS NECK.

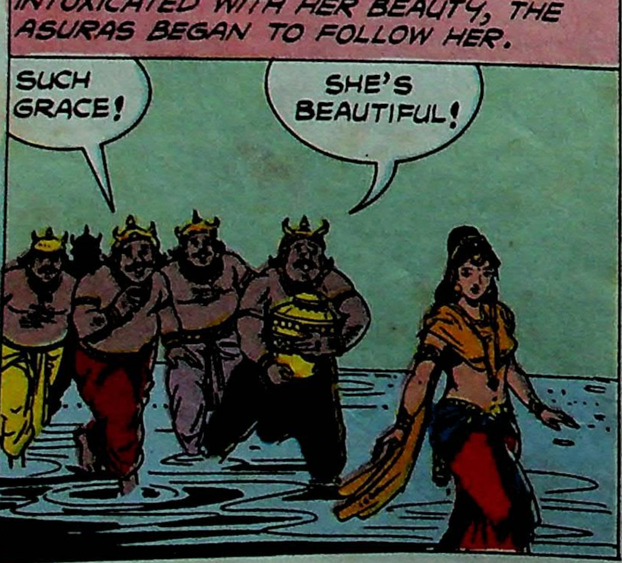
VISHNU, LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS, ACCEPTED HER.

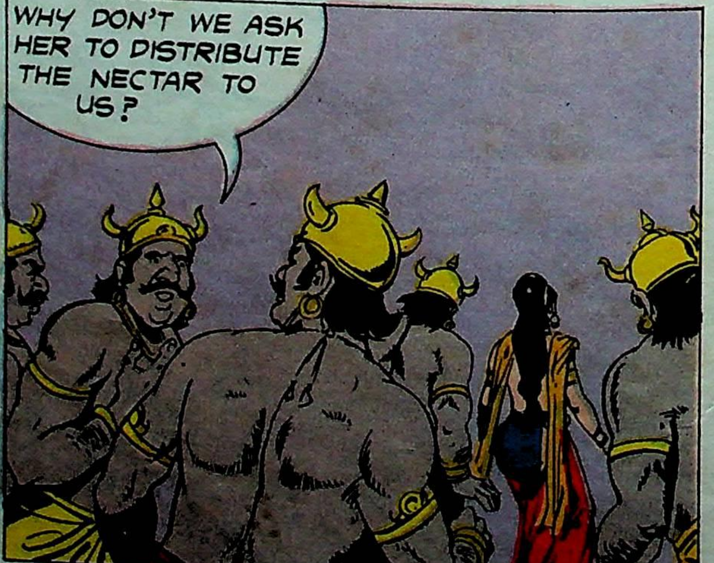

THE CHURNING CONTINUED.
WHIRR-WHIRR!
FINALLY DHANVANTARI, THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN, CAME FORTH, HOLDING THE VESSEL OF CELESTIAL NECTAR.
AT LAST! THE DIVINE ELIXIR!
THE ASURAS GAVE A GREAT ROAR...
...AND TOOK THE PRECIOUS VESSEL FROM HIM BY FORCE.
ALL IS LOST. O, LORD VISHNU, SAVE THE PRECIOUS NECTAR!

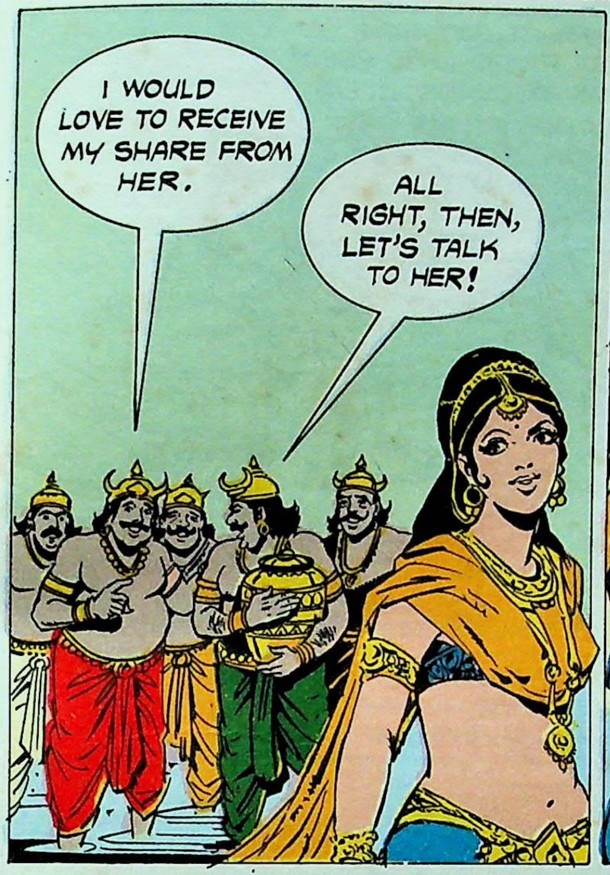

VISHNU AT ONCE ASSUMED THE BEWITCHING FORM OF MOHINI, THE ENCHANTRESS.

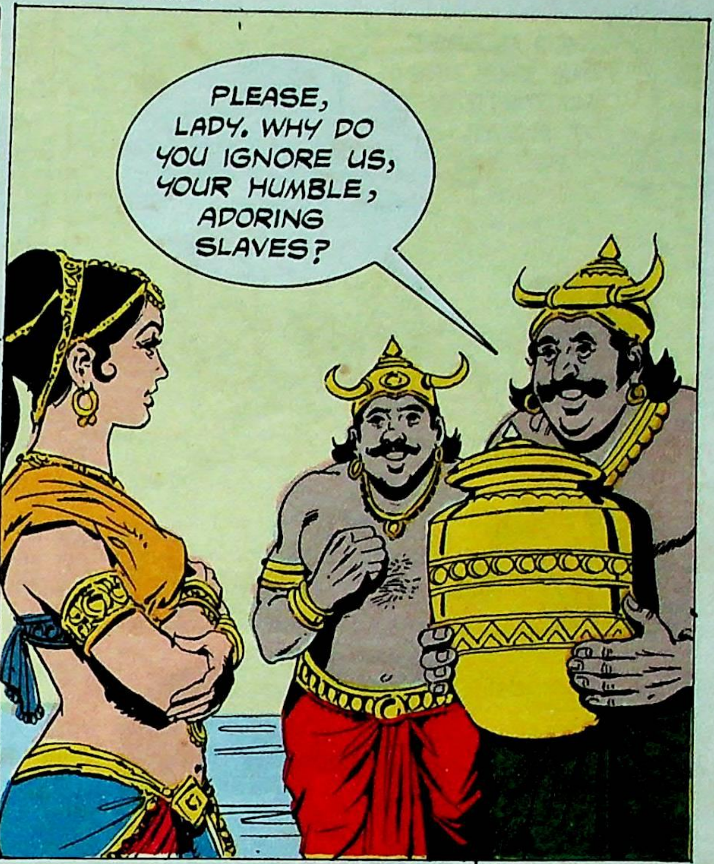

MEANWHILE, THE ASURAS HAD BEGUN QUARRELLING AMONG THEMSELVES OVER THE JAR OF NECTAR.


SUDDENLY, THEY SAW MOHINI APPROACHING THEM WITH SWEET LOOKS AND ENCHANTING SMILES.

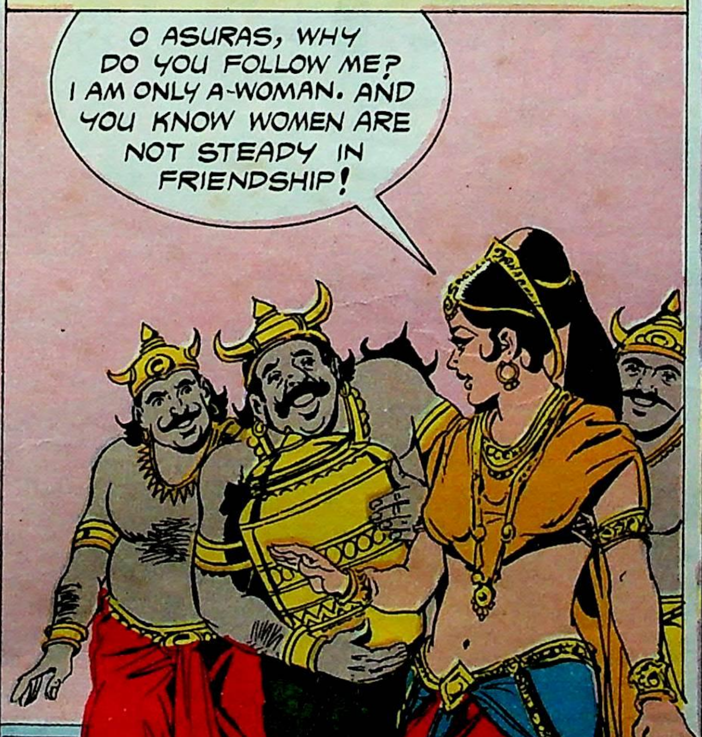

INTOXICATED WITH HER BEAUTY, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO FOLLOW HER.
SUCH GRACE!
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

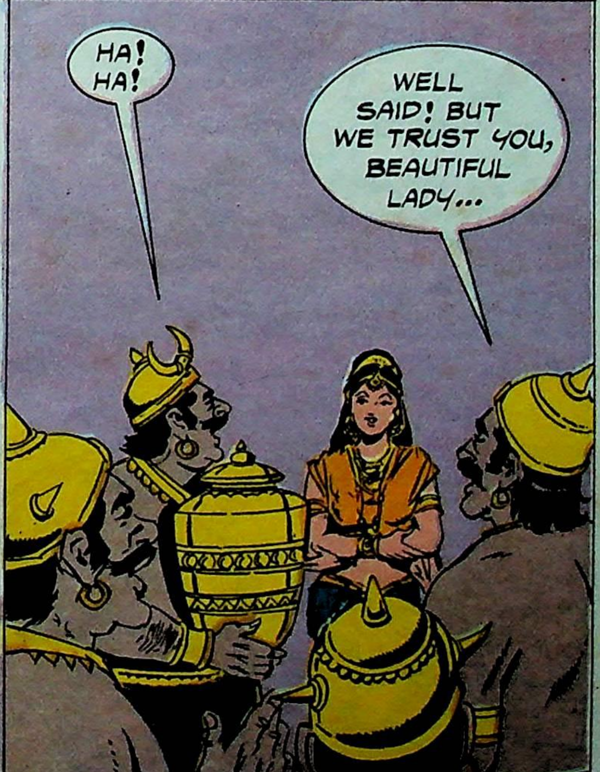

WHY DON'T WE ASK HER TO DISTRIBUTE THE NECTAR TO US?

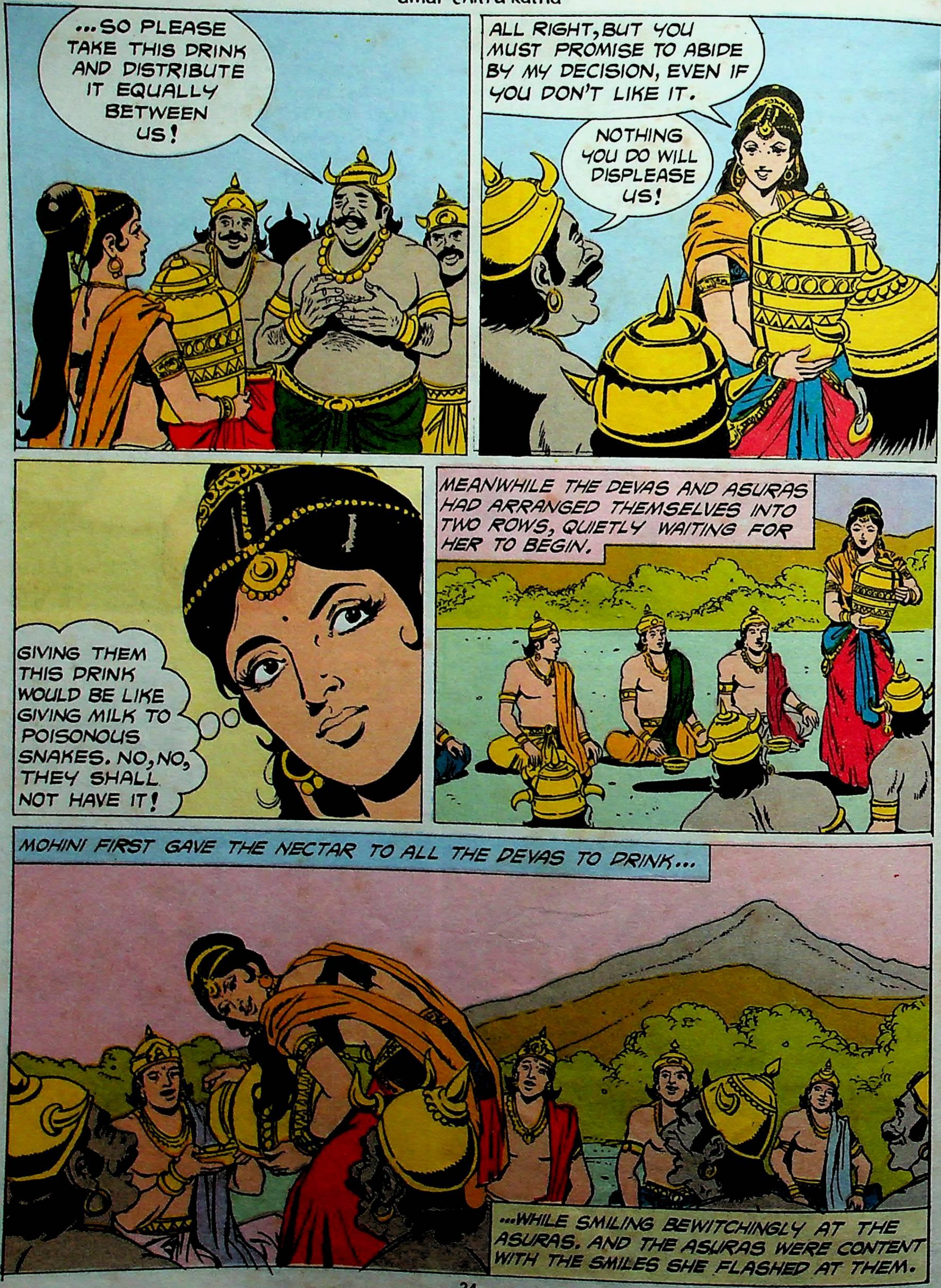

I WOULD LOVE TO RECEIVE MY SHARE FROM HER.
ALL RIGHT, THEN, LET'S TALK TO HER!

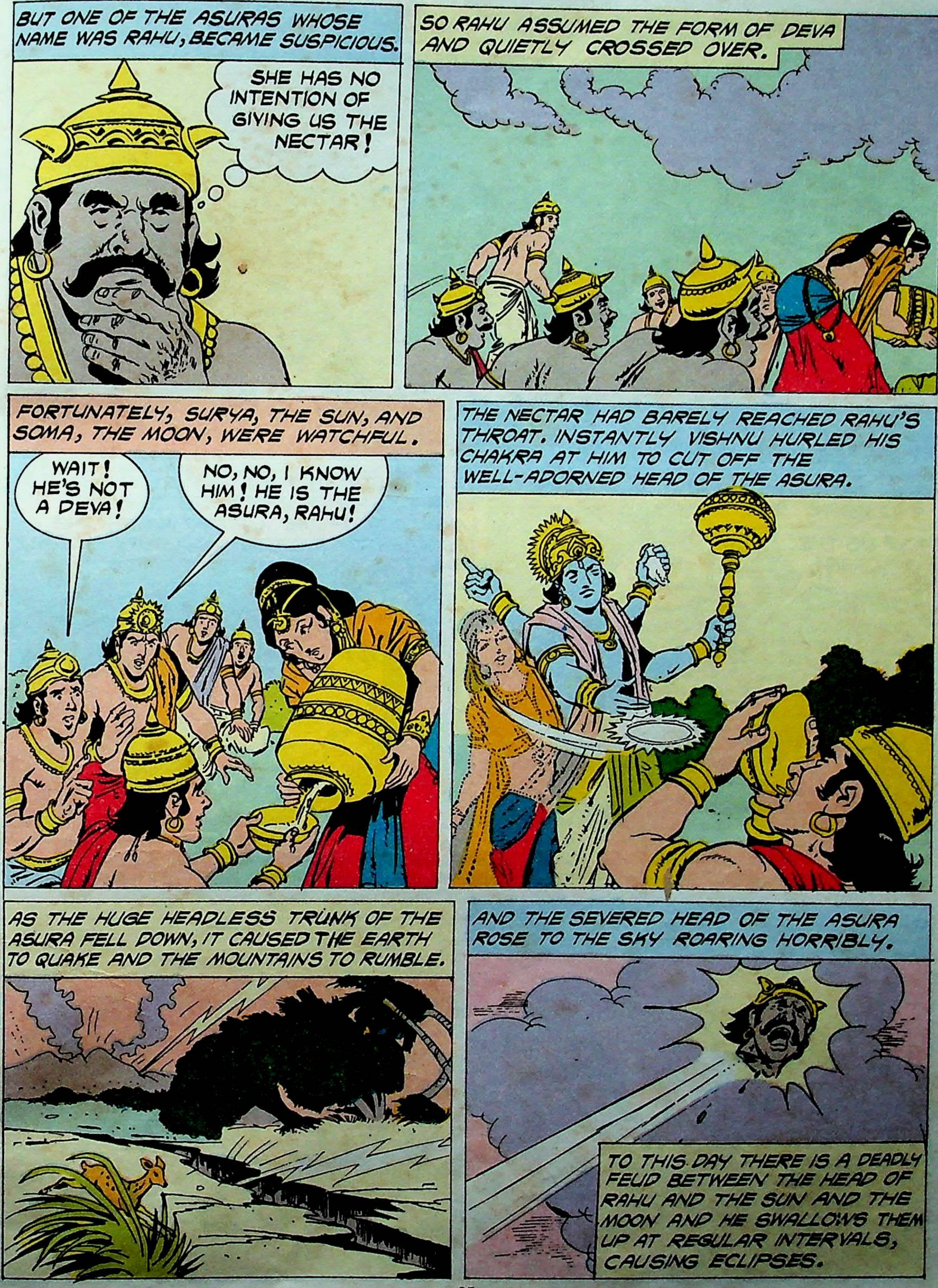

PLEASE, LADY. WHY DO YOU IGNORE US, YOUR HUMBLE, ADORING SLAVES?

MOHINI DECIDED TO TEASE THEM A LITTLE.

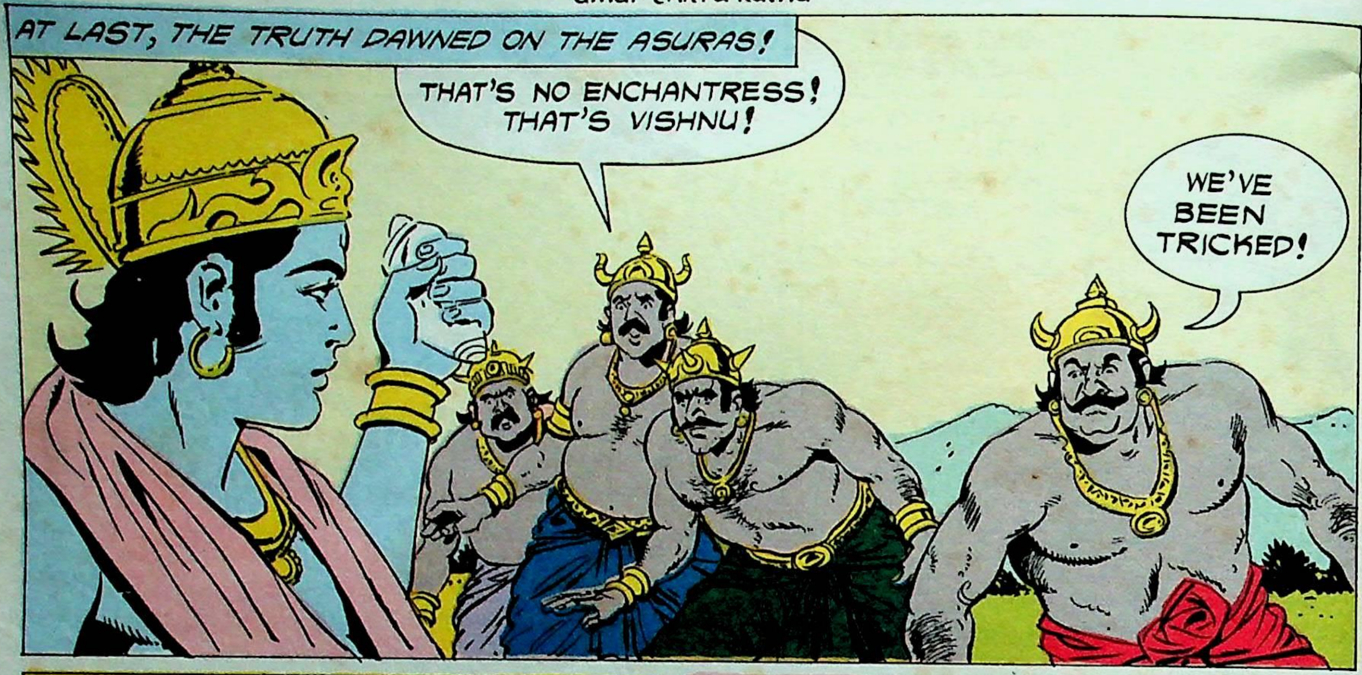

O ASURAS, WHY DO YOU FOLLOW ME? I AM ONLY A-WOMAN. AND YOU KNOW WOMEN ARE NOT STEADY IN FRIENDSHIP!


HA! HA!
WELL SAID! BUT WE TRUST YOU, BEAUTIFUL LADY...

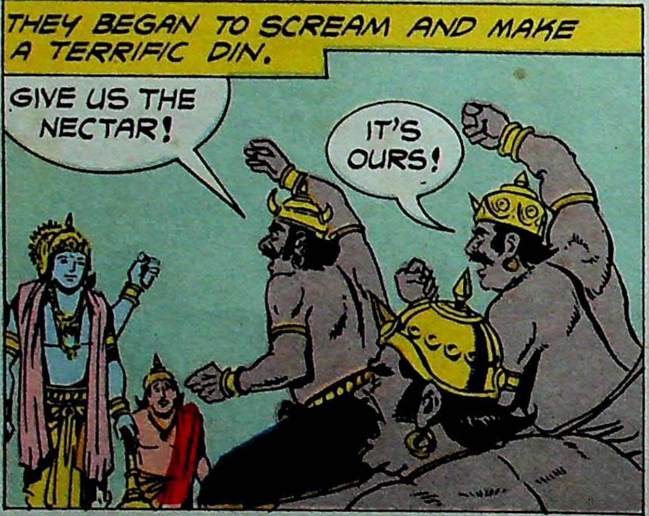

...SO PLEASE TAKE THIS DRINK AND DISTRIBUTE IT EQUALLY BETWEEN US!
ALL RIGHT, BUT YOU MUST PROMISE TO ABIDE BY MY DECISION, EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT.
NOTHING YOU DO WILL DISPLEASE US!
GIVING THEM THIS DRINK WOULD BE LIKE GIVING MILK TO POISONOUS SNAKES. NO, NO, THEY SHALL NOT HAVE IT!
MEANWHILE THE DEVAS AND ASURAS HAD ARRANGED THEMSELVES INTO TWO ROWS, QUIETLY WAITING FOR HER TO BEGIN.
MOHINI FIRST GAVE THE NECTAR TO ALL THE DEVAS TO DRINK...
...WHILE SMILING BEWITCHINGLY AT THE ASURAS. AND THE ASURAS WERE CONTENT WITH THE SMILES SHE FLASHED AT THEM.


BUT ONE OF THE ASURAS WHOSE NAME WAS RAHU, BECAME SUSPICIOUS.
SHE HAS NO INTENTION OF GIVING US THE NECTAR!
SO RAHU ASSUMED THE FORM OF DEVA AND QUIETLY CROSSED OVER.
FORTUNATELY, SURYA, THE SUN, AND SOMA, THE MOON, WERE WATCHFUL.
WAIT! HE'S NOT A DEVA!
NO, NO, I KNOW HIM! HE IS THE ASURA, RAHU!
THE NECTAR HAD BARELY REACHED RAHU'S THROAT. INSTANTLY VISHNU HURLED HIS CHAKRA AT HIM TO CUT OFF THE WELL-ADORNED HEAD OF THE ASURA.
AS THE HUGE HEADLESS TRUNK OF THE ASURA FELL DOWN, IT CAUSED THE EARTH TO QUAKE AND THE MOUNTAINS TO RUMBLE.
AND THE SEVERED HEAD OF THE ASURA ROSE TO THE SKY ROARING HORRIBLY.
TO THIS DAY THERE IS A DEADLY FEUD BETWEEN THE HEAD OF RAHU AND THE SUN AND THE MOON AND HE SWALLOWS THEM UP AT REGULAR INTERVALS, CAUSING ECLIPSES.

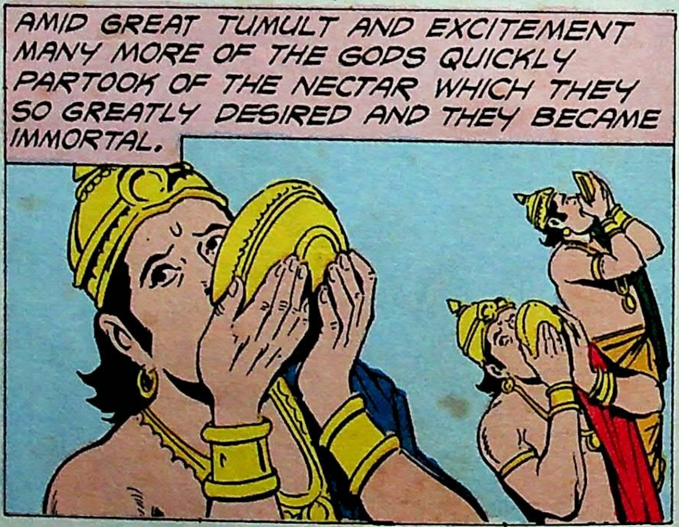
AT LAST, THE TRUTH DAWNED ON THE ASURAS!


THAT'S NO ENCHANTRESS! THAT'S VISHNU!
WE'VE BEEN TRICKED!

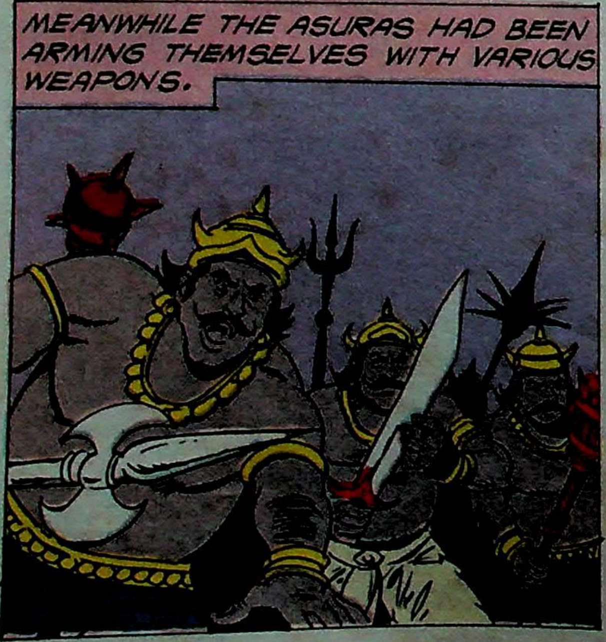
THEY BEGAN TO SCREAM AND MAKE A TERRIFIC DIN.


GIVE US THE NECTAR!
IT'S OURS!

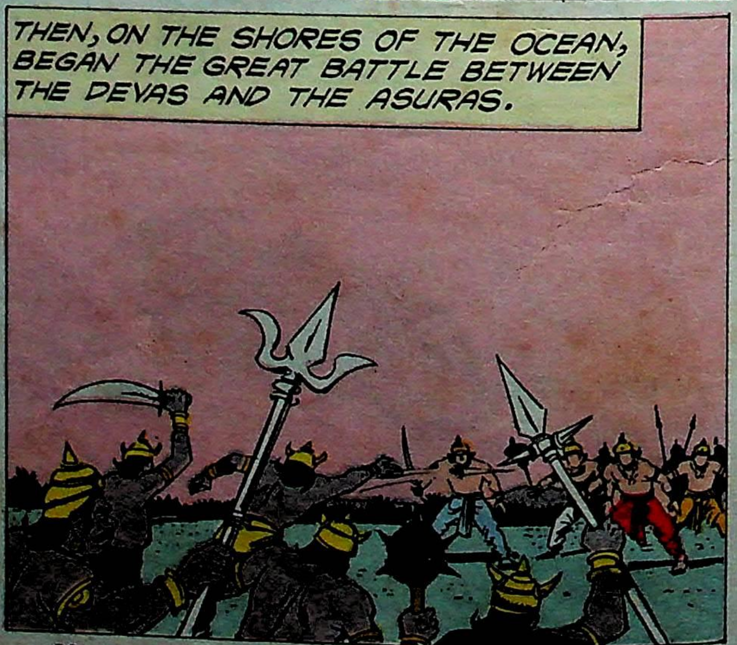
AMID GREAT TUMULT AND EXCITEMENT MANY MORE OF THE GODS QUICKLY PARTOOK OF THE NECTAR WHICH THEY SO GREATLY DESIRED AND THEY BECAME IMMORTAL.

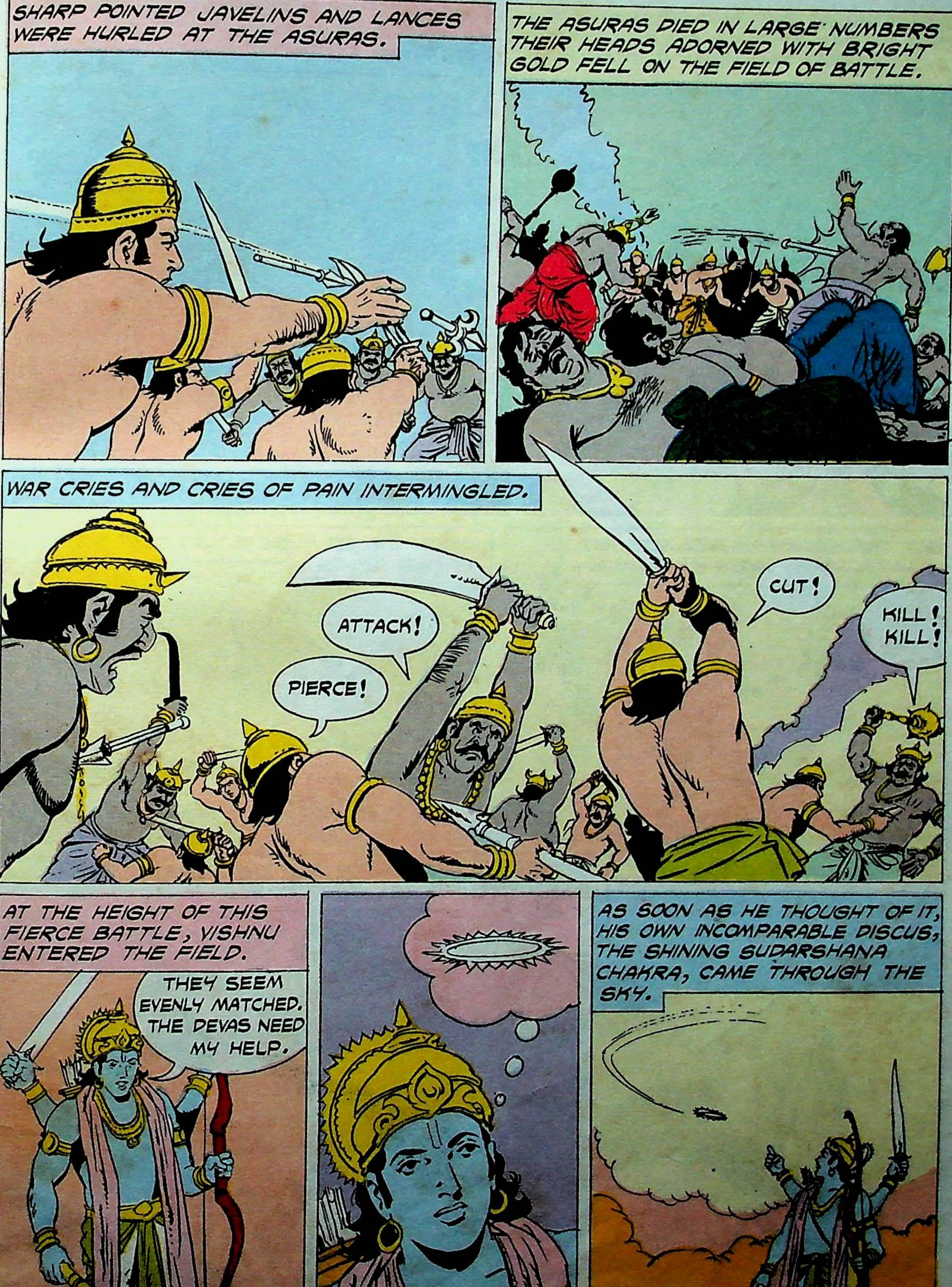


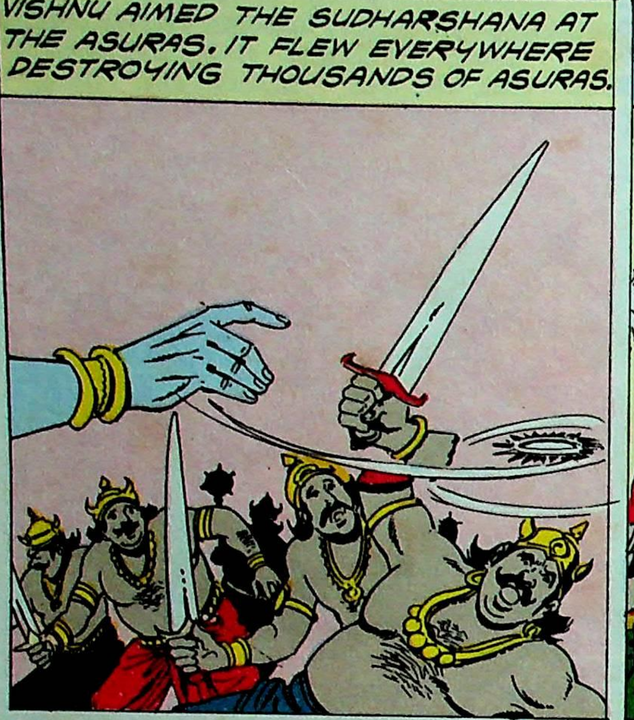
MEANWHILE THE ASURAS HAD BEEN ARMING THEMSELVES WITH VARIOUS WEAPONS.



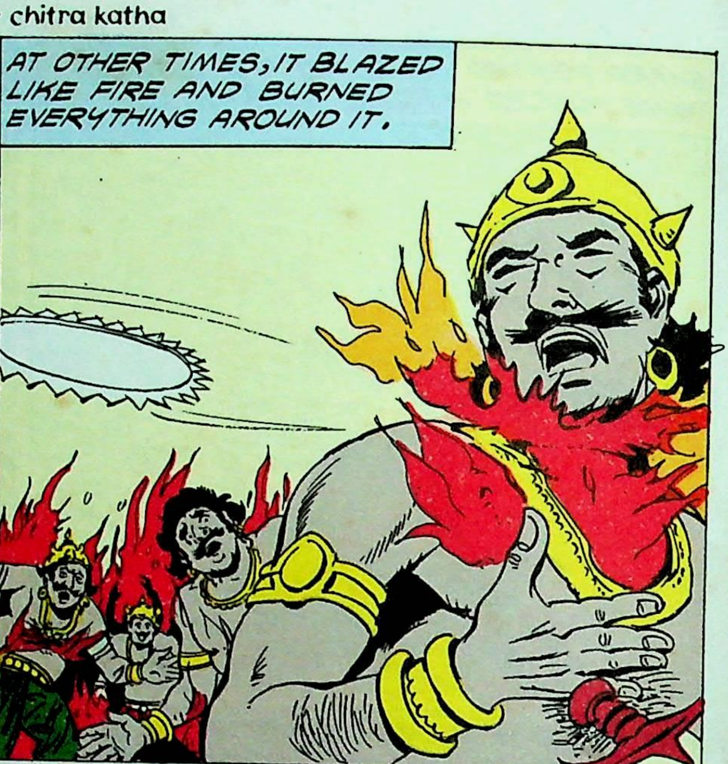
THEN, ON THE SHORES OF THE OCEAN, BEGAN THE GREAT BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.



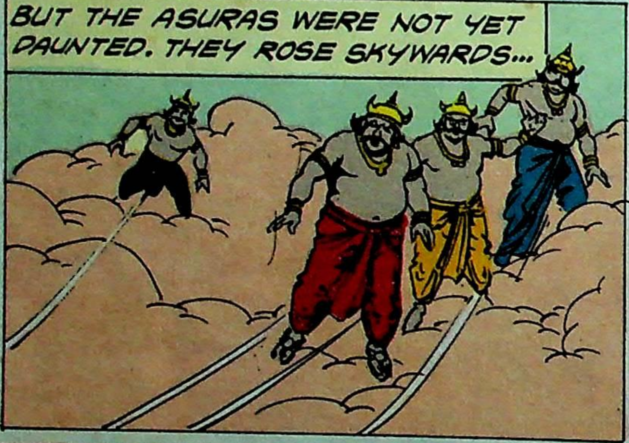

SHARP POINTED JAVELINS AND LANCES WERE HURLED AT THE ASURAS.
THE ASURAS DIED IN LARGE NUMBERS THEIR HEADS ADORNED WITH BRIGHT GOLD FELL ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.
WAR CRIES AND CRIES OF PAIN INTERMINGLED.
ATTACK!
PIERCE!
CUT!
KILL! KILL!
AT THE HEIGHT OF THIS FIERCE BATTLE, VISHNU ENTERED THE FIELD.
THEY SEEM EVENLY MATCHED. THE DEVAS NEED MY HELP.
AS SOON AS HE THOUGHT OF IT, HIS OWN INCOMPARABLE DISCUS, THE SHINING SUDARSHANA CHAKRA, CAME THROUGH THE SKY.



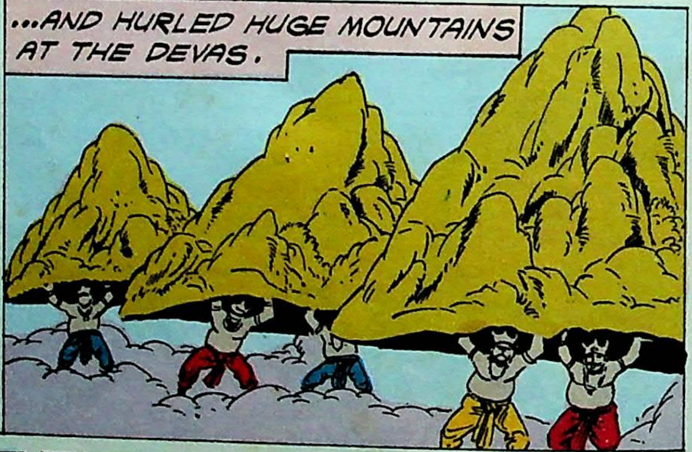
VISHNU AIMED THE SUDHARSHANA AT THE ASURAS. IT FLEW EVERYWHERE DESTROYING THOUSANDS OF ASURAS.



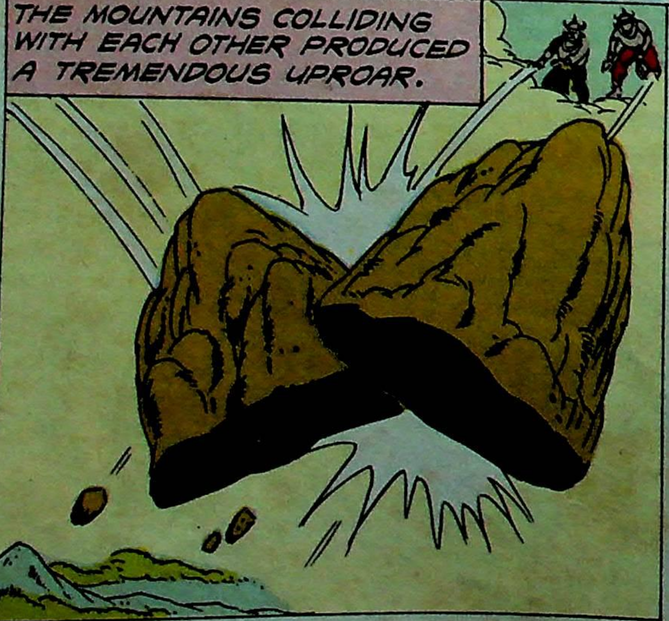
AT OTHER TIMES, IT BLAZED LIKE FIRE AND BURNED EVERYTHING AROUND IT.



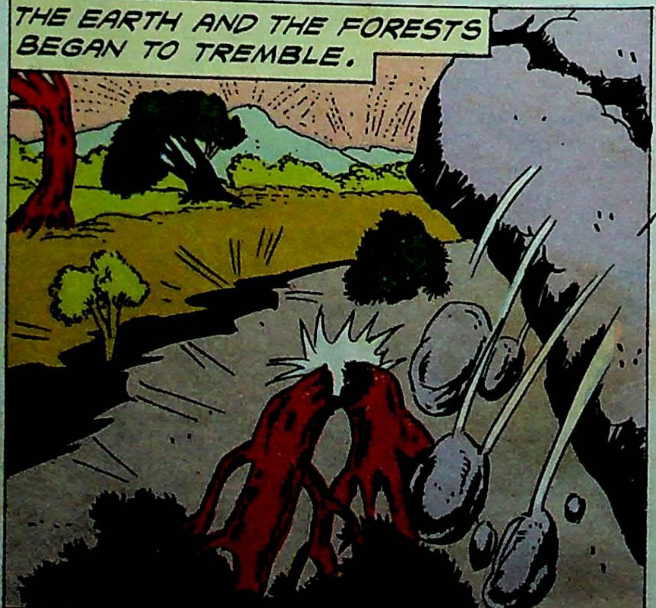
BUT THE ASURAS WERE NOT YET DAUNTED. THEY ROSE SKYWARDS...



...AND HURLED HUGE MOUNTAINS AT THE DEVAS.

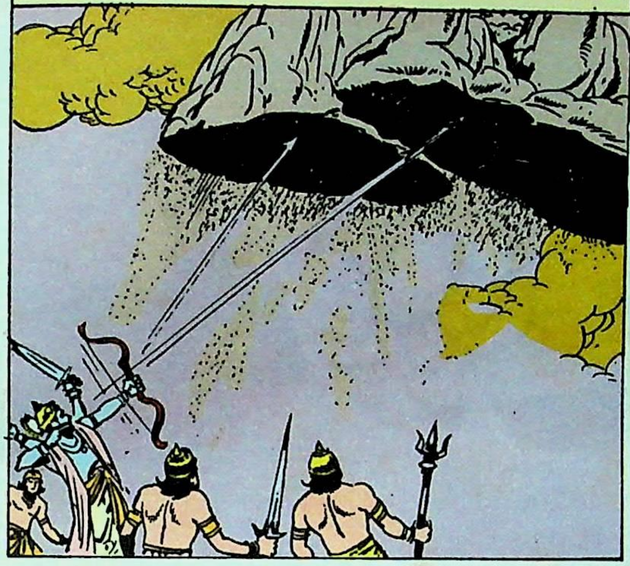


THE MOUNTAINS COLLIDING WITH EACH OTHER PRODUCED A TREMENDOUS UPROAR.

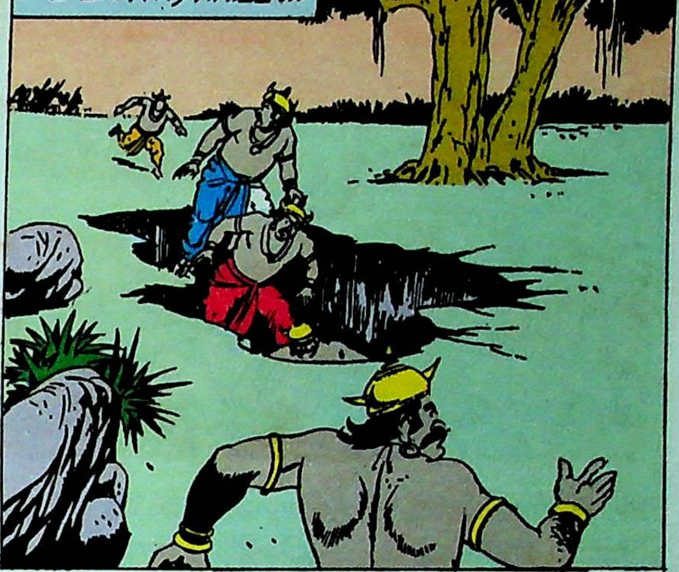


THE EARTH AND THE FORESTS BEGAN TO TREMBLE.

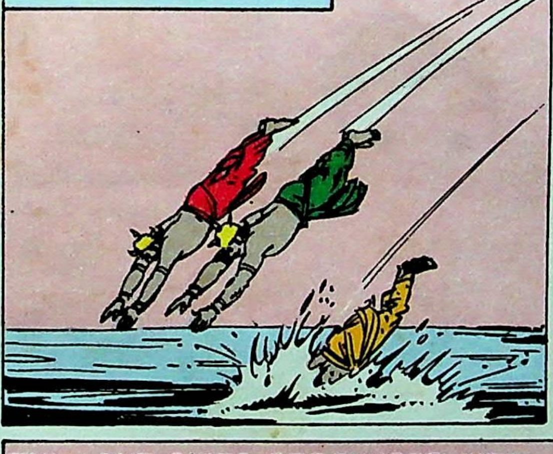
AGAIN THE DIVINE VISHNU CAME TO THE AID OF THE DEVAS. SHOOTING GOLDEN-HEADED ARROWS AT THE FALLING MOUNTAINS, HE REDUCED THEM TO DUST.



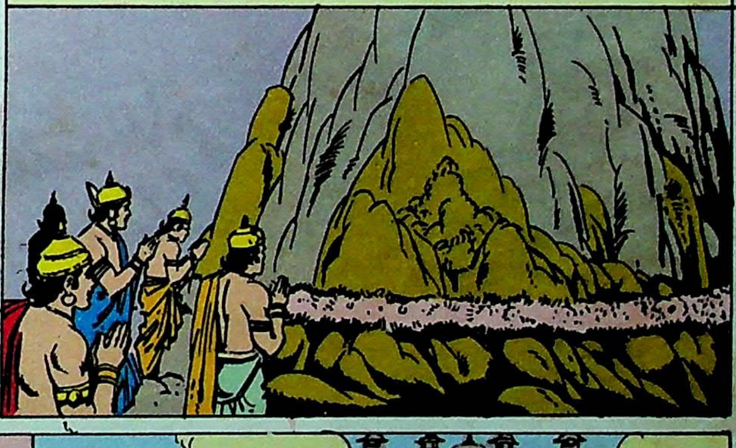
THE ASURAS WERE DEFEATED. THEY COULD FIGHT BACK NO MORE. SHRIEKING LOUDLY, SOME OF THEM ENTERED THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH, WHILE ...



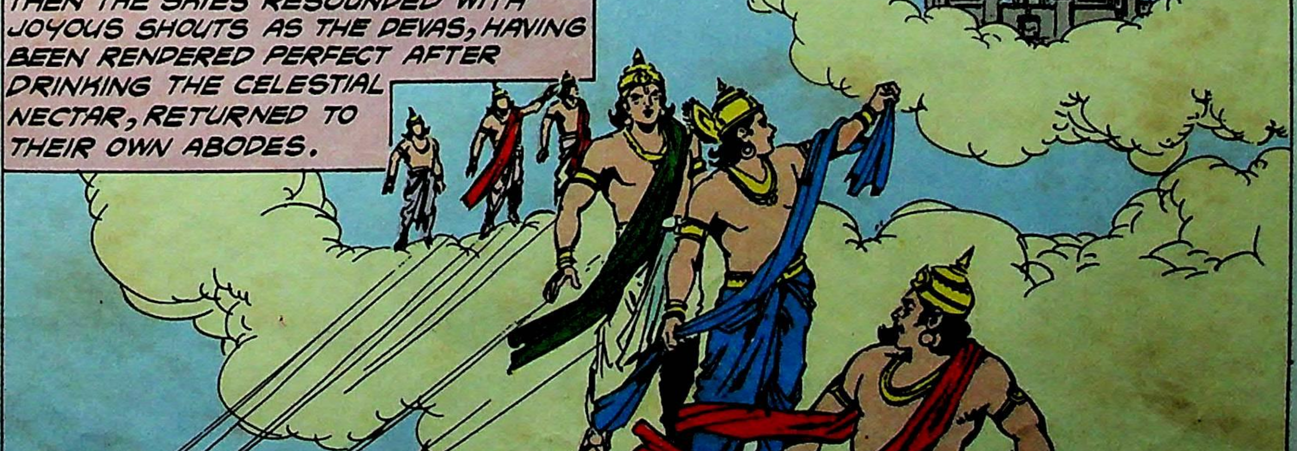
...OTHERS PLUNGED INTO THE OCEAN.



THE VICTORIOUS DEVAS PUT MOUNT MANDARA BACK IN ITS OLD PLACE AND DID OBEISANCE TO IT.



THEN THE SKIES RESOUNDED WITH JOYOUS SHOUTS AS THE DEVAS, HAVING BEEN RENDERED PERFECT AFTER DRINKING THE CELESTIAL NECTAR, RETURNED TO THEIR OWN ABODES.



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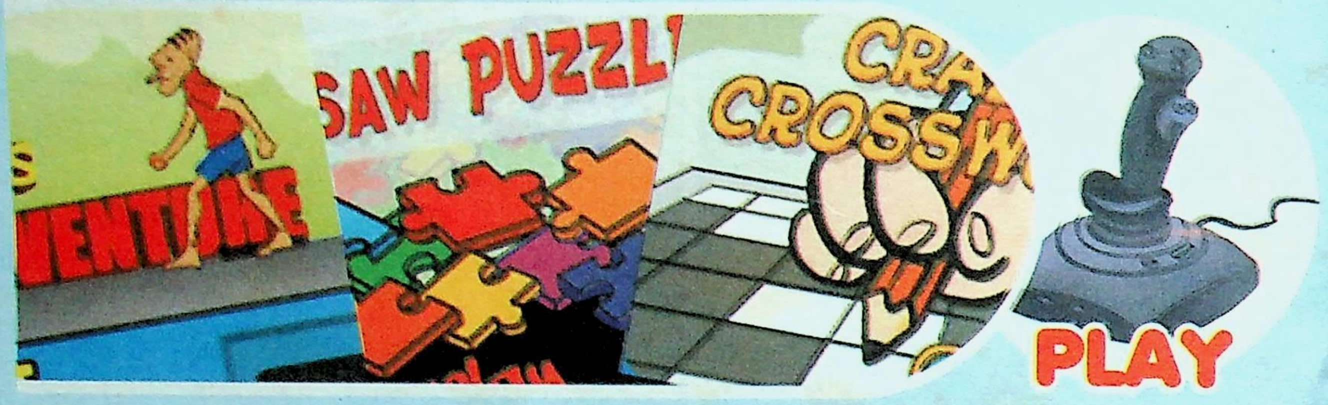
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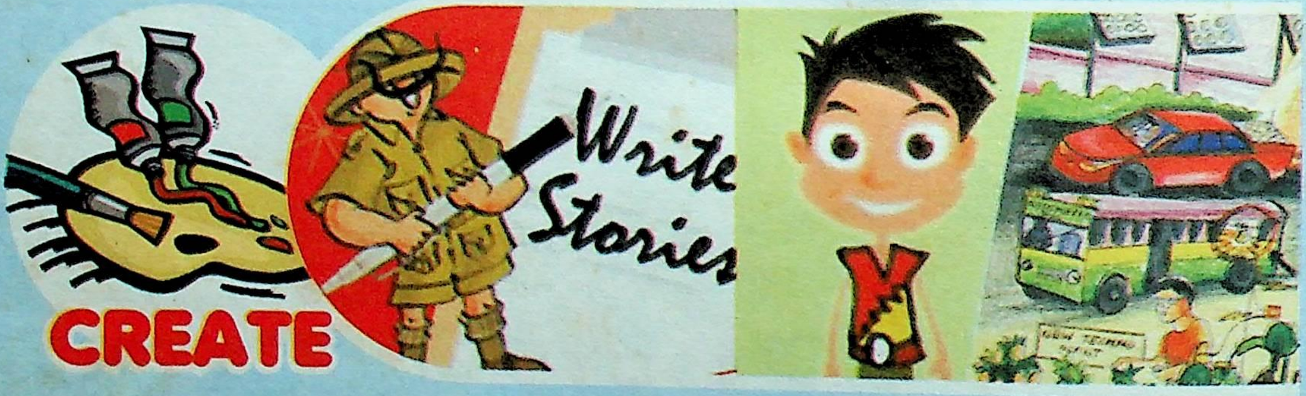
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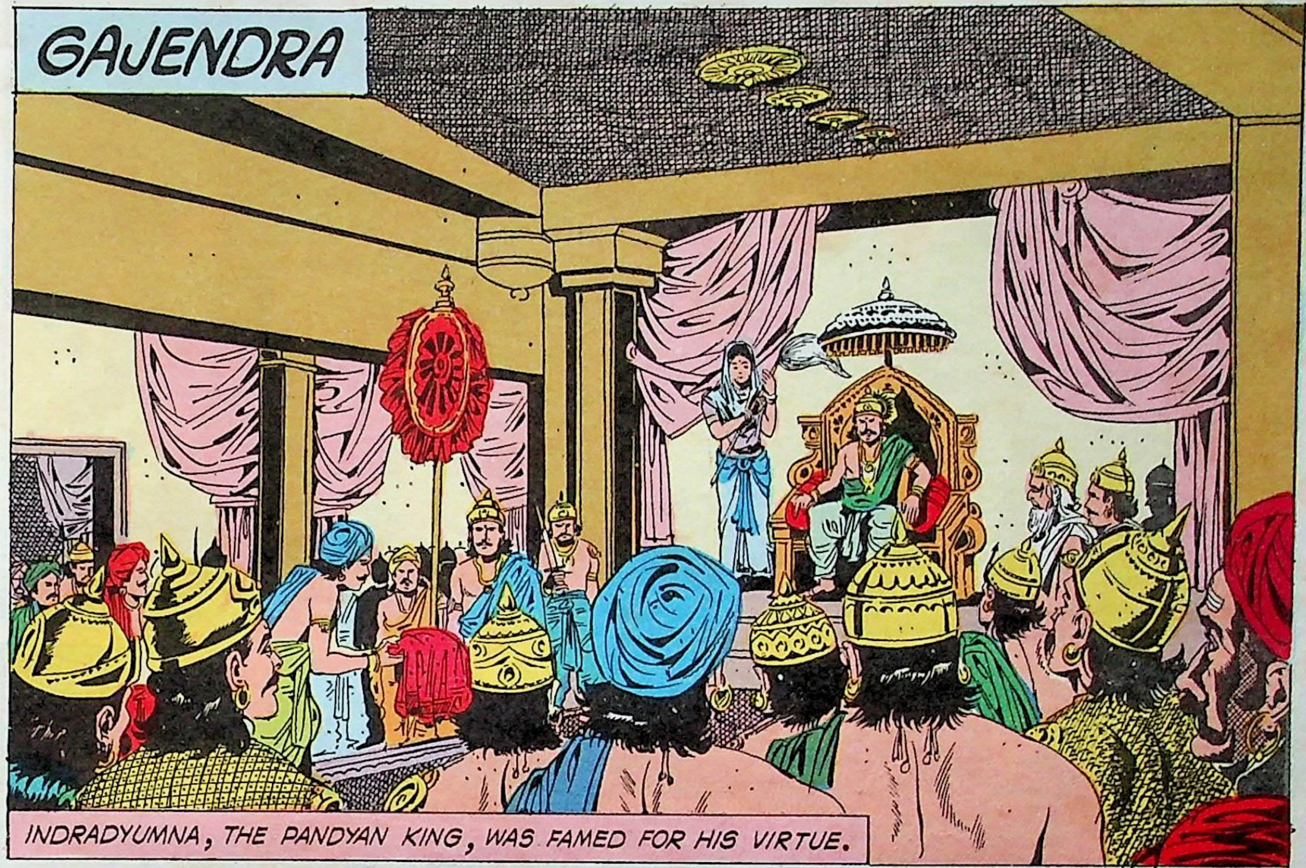
TALES OF VISHNU

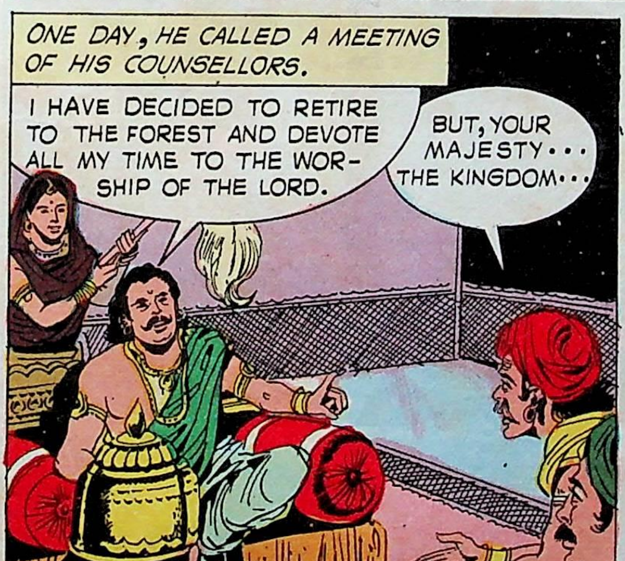
Vishnu, they say, is just one of a powerful threesome – the highest lords of the universe. However, though Brahma has created the universe and Shiva can destroy it, it is up to the great god Vishnu to keep all creatures within it well and happy. Always compassionate, he is also the wisest of the trinity. It is he who good-naturedly sorts out the mess the others create. And above all, Vishnu always favours the good and the pure.

Script	Illustrations	Editor
Subba Rao	H.S.Chavan	Anant Pai

GAJENDRA

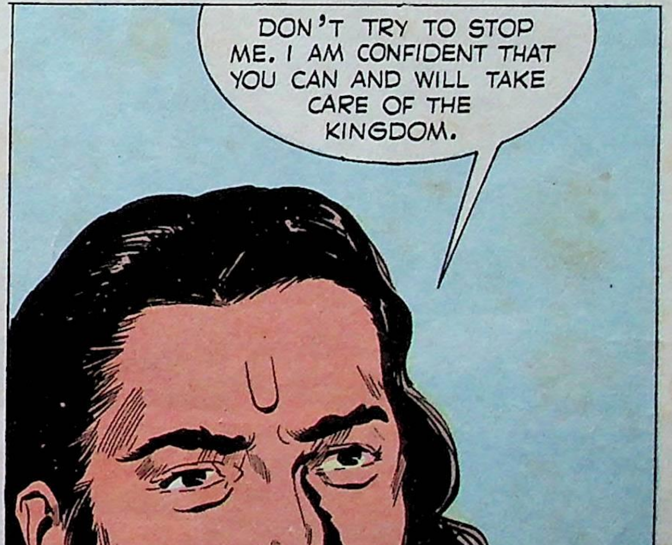


INDRADYUMNA, THE PANDYAN KING, WAS FAMED FOR HIS VIRTUE.



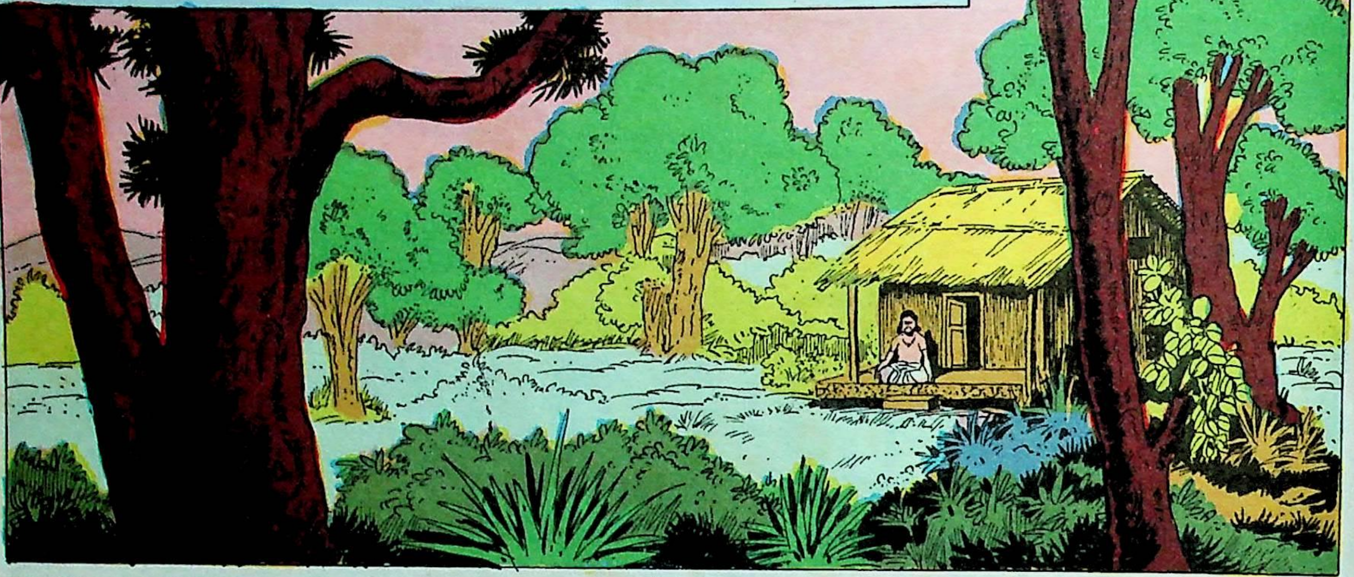
ONE DAY, HE CALLED A MEETING OF HIS COUNSELLORS.

I HAVE DECIDED TO RETIRE TO THE FOREST AND DEVOTE ALL MY TIME TO THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD.
BUT, YOUR MAJESTY... THE KINGDOM...

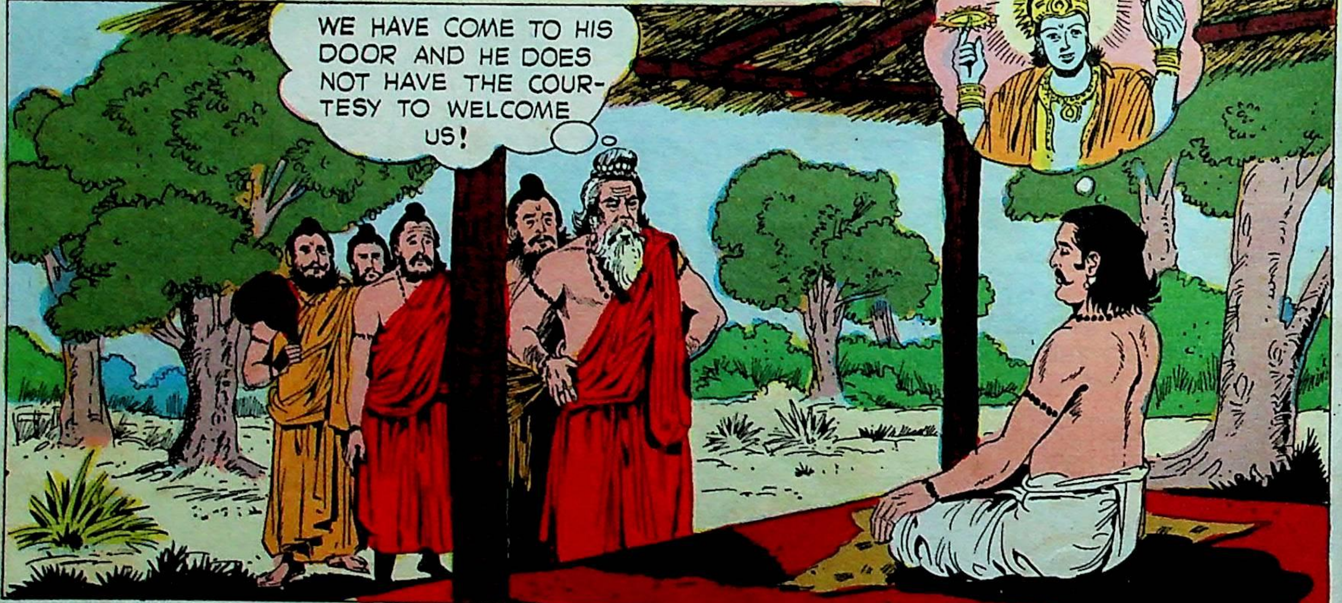


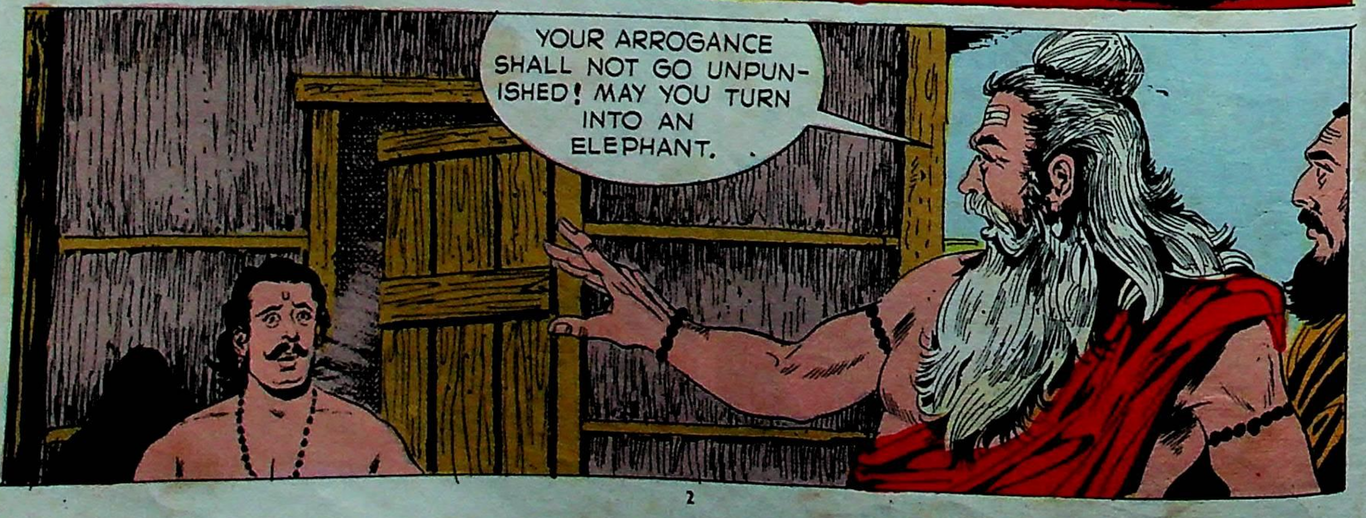
DON'T TRY TO STOP ME. I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU CAN AND WILL TAKE CARE OF THE KINGDOM.

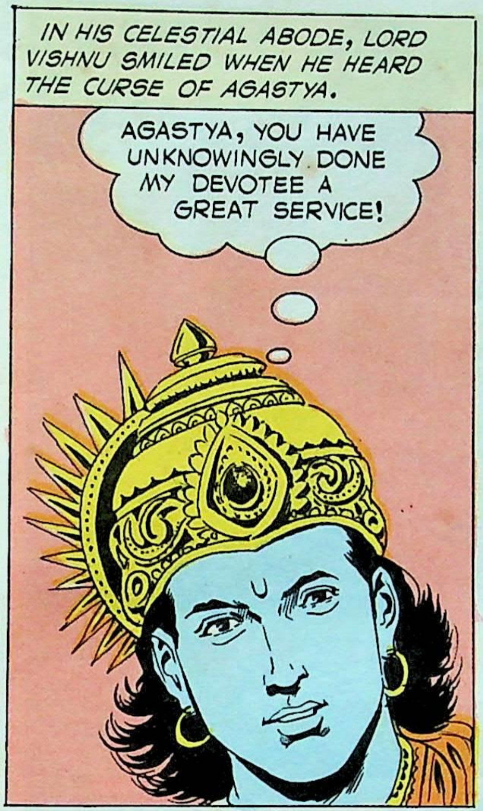
INDRADYUMNA THEN RETIRED TO THE KULACHALA MOUNTAINS WHERE HE BUILT A COTTAGE FOR HIMSELF. OBSERVING THE VOW OF SILENCE, HE SAT WITH HIS MIND DWELLING UPON LORD VISHNU.



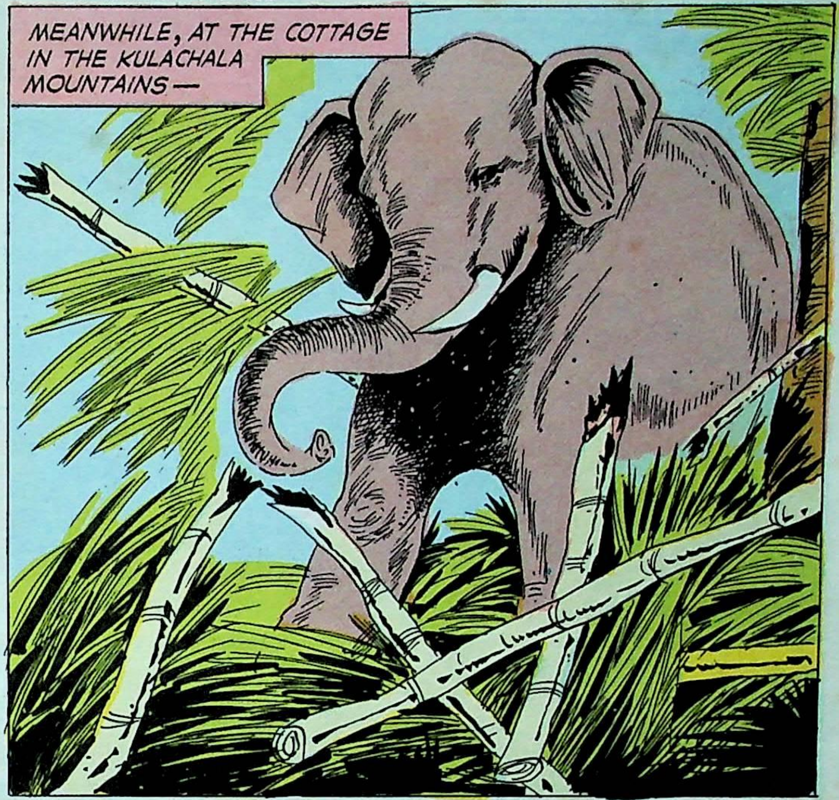
ONE DAY, SAGE AGASTYA CAME THAT WAY WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

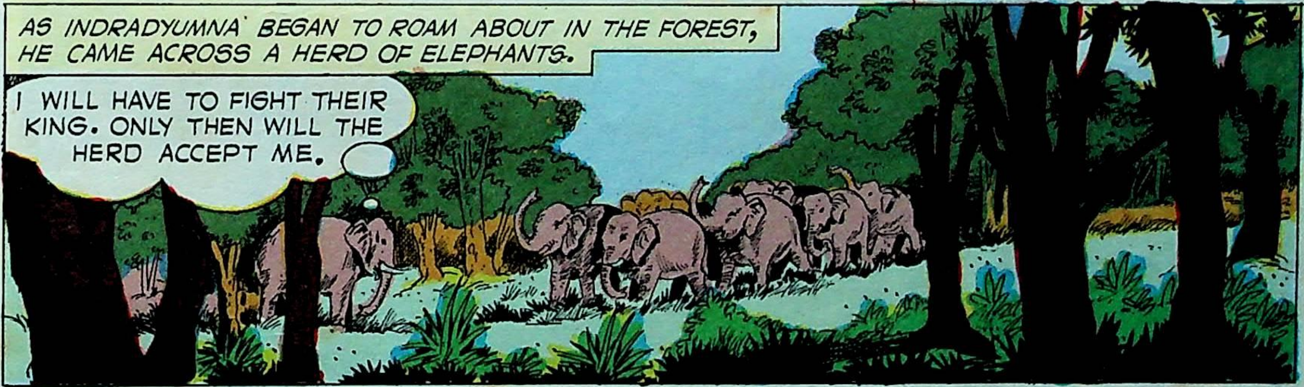

WE HAVE COME TO HIS DOOR AND HE DOES NOT HAVE THE COURTESY TO WELCOME US!


YOUR ARROGANCE SHALL NOT GO UNPUNISHED! MAY YOU TURN INTO AN ELEPHANT.

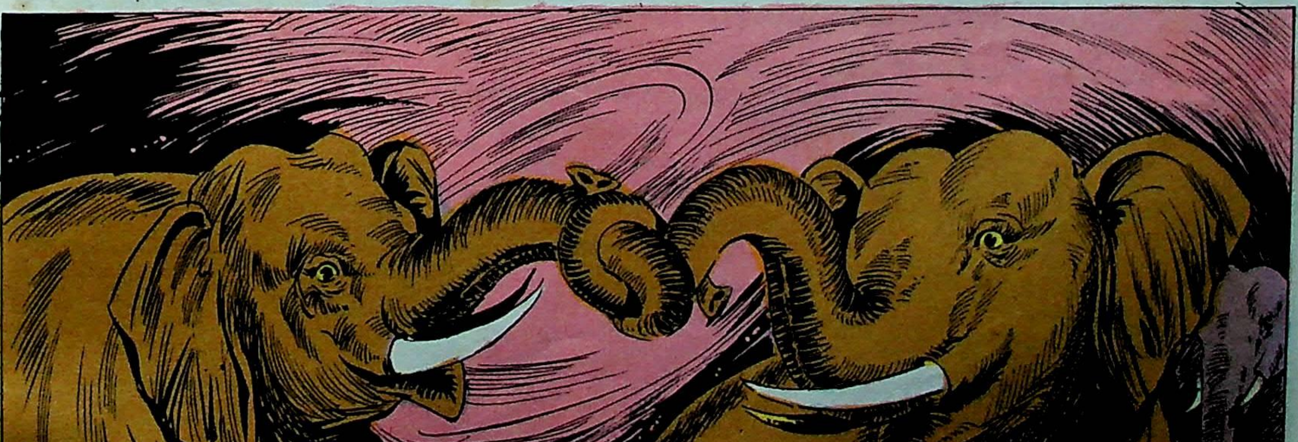

IN HIS CELESTIAL ABODE, LORD VISHNU SMILED WHEN HE HEARD THE CURSE OF AGASTYA.

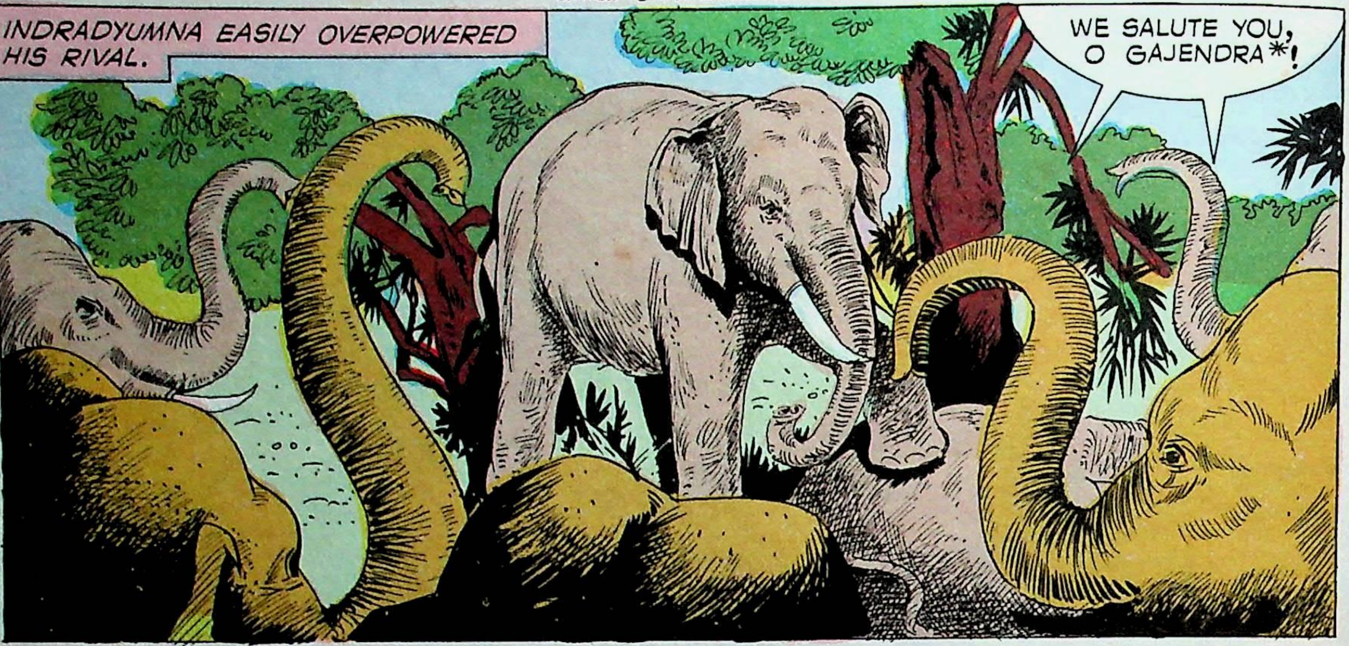
AGASTYA, YOU HAVE UNKNOWINGLY DONE MY DEVOTEE A GREAT SERVICE!

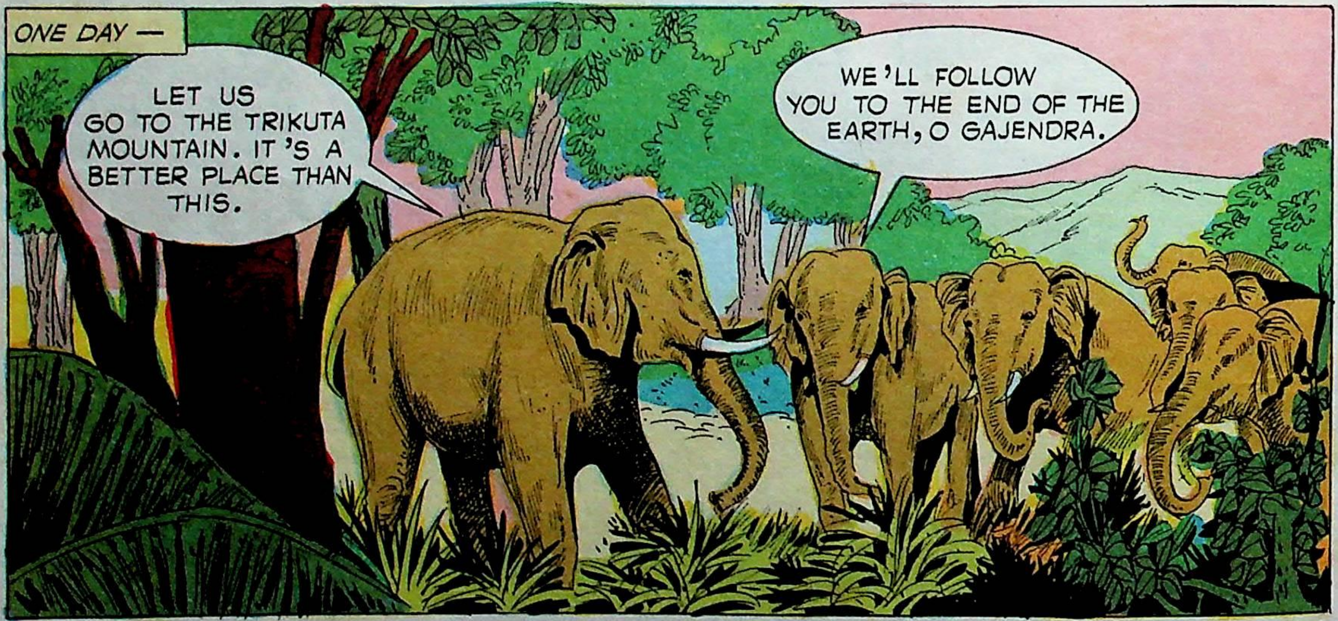

MEANWHILE, AT THE COTTAGE IN THE KULACHALA MOUNTAINS —

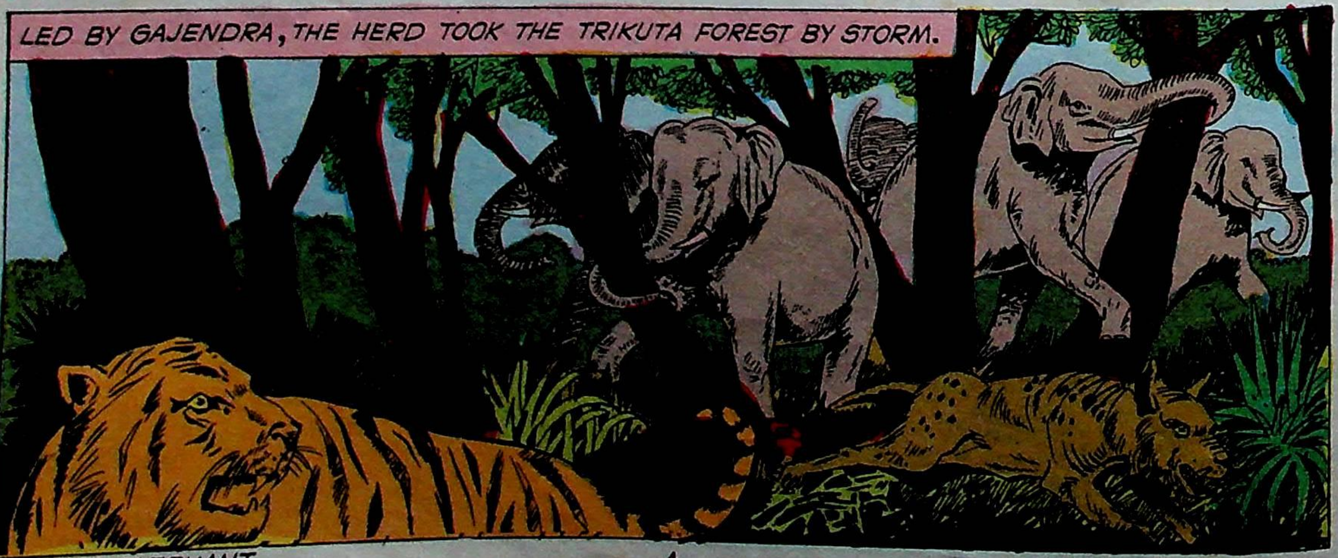

AS INDRADYUMNA BEGAN TO ROAM ABOUT IN THE FOREST, HE CAME ACROSS A HERD OF ELEPHANTS.

I WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THEIR KING. ONLY THEN WILL THE HERD ACCEPT ME.




INDRADYUMNA EASILY OVERPOWERED HIS RIVAL.
WE SALUTE YOU, O GAJENDRA*!


ONE DAY —
LET US GO TO THE TRIKUTA MOUNTAIN. IT'S A BETTER PLACE THAN THIS.
WE'LL FOLLOW YOU TO THE END OF THE EARTH, O GAJENDRA.


LED BY GAJENDRA, THE HERD TOOK THE TRIKUTA FOREST BY STORM.

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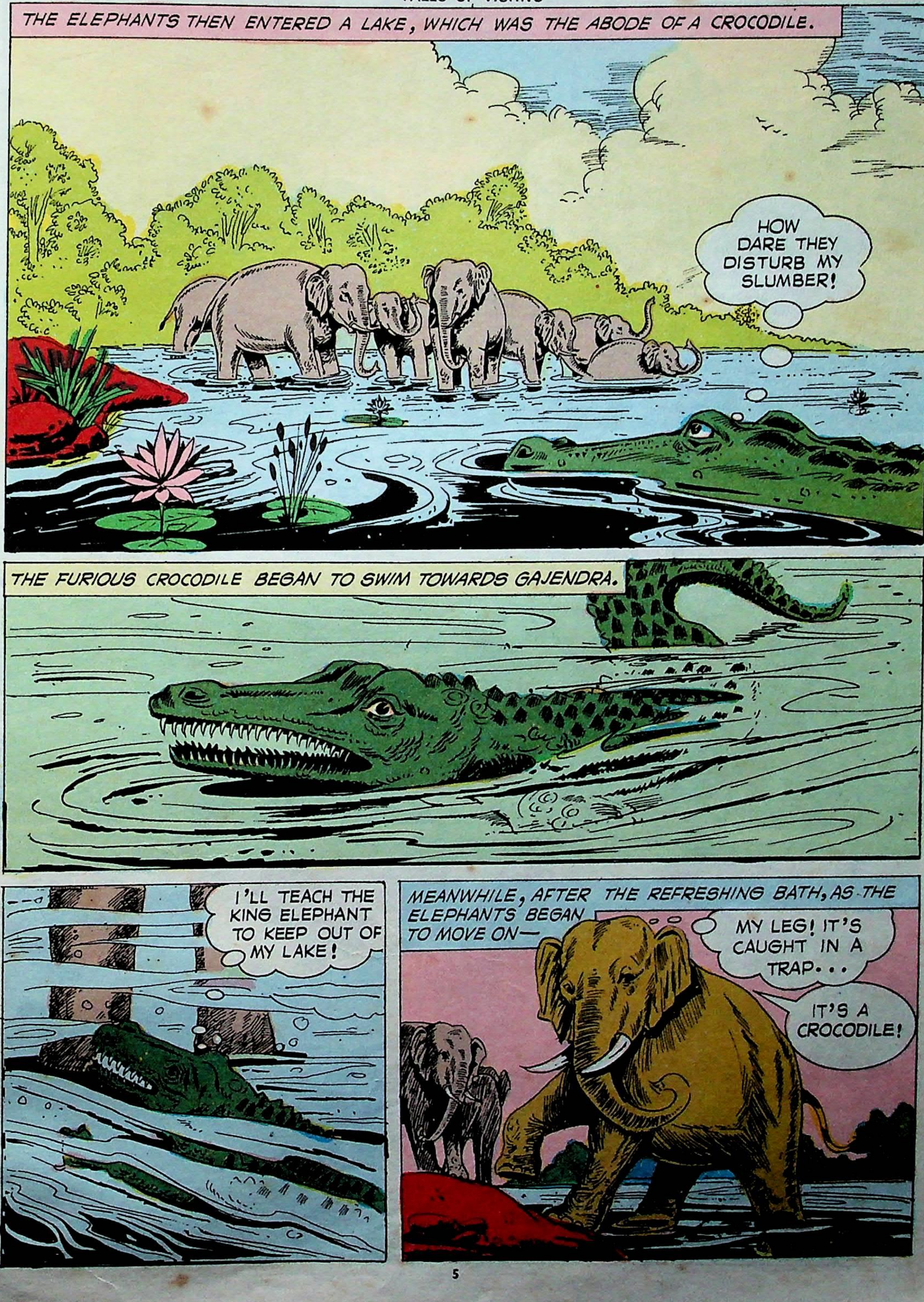
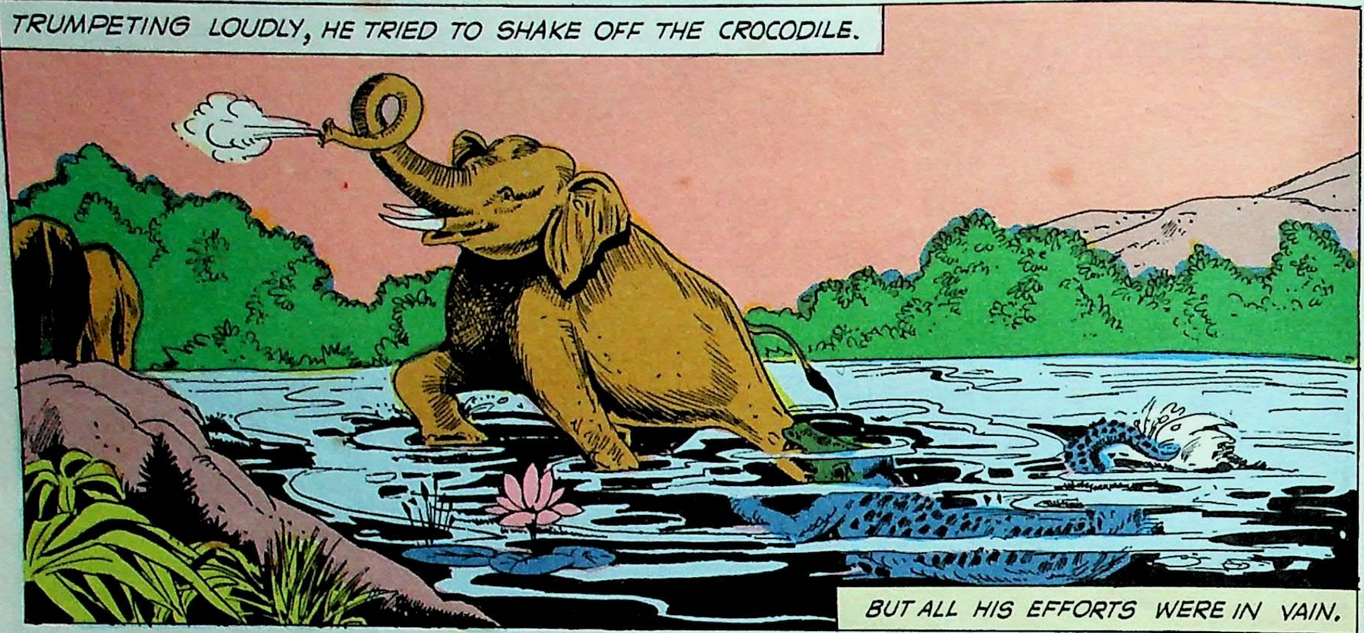
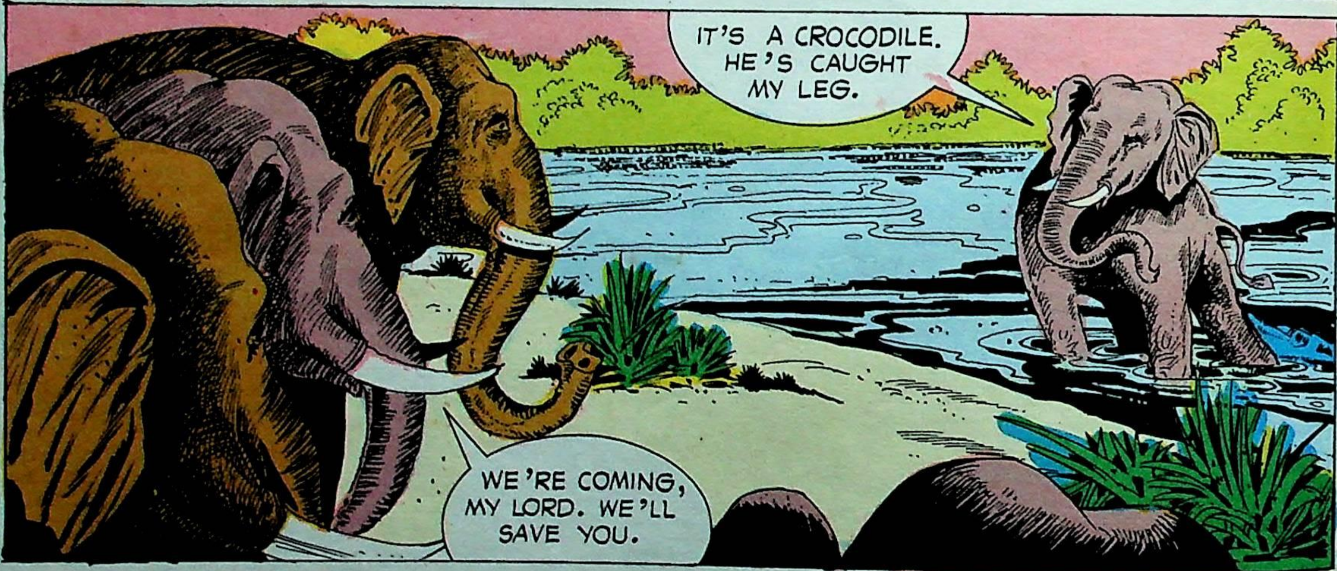
* KING ELEPHANT

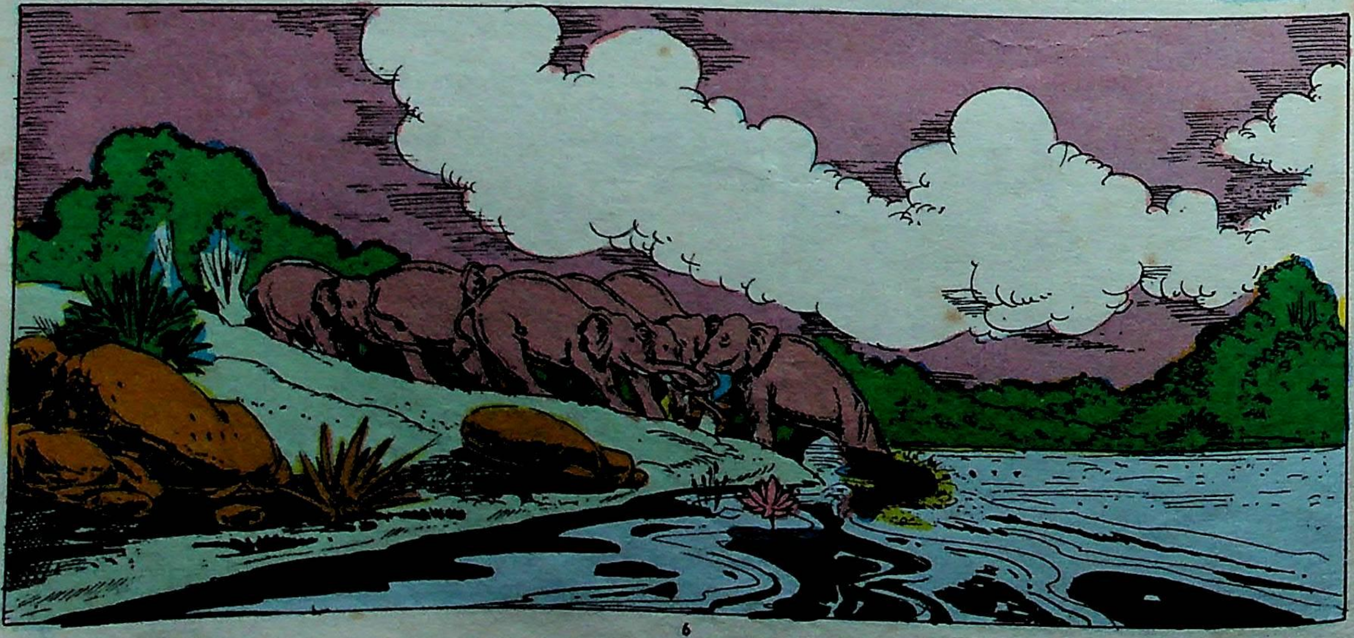

THE ELEPHANTS THEN ENTERED A LAKE, WHICH WAS THE ABODE OF A CROCODILE.
HOW DARE THEY DISTURB MY SLUMBER!
THE FURIOUS CROCODILE BEGAN TO SWIM TOWARDS GAJENDRA.
I'LL TEACH THE KING ELEPHANT TO KEEP OUT OF MY LAKE!
MEANWHILE, AFTER THE REFRESHING BATH, AS THE ELEPHANTS BEGAN TO MOVE ON—
MY LEG! IT'S CAUGHT IN A TRAP...
IT'S A CROCODILE!

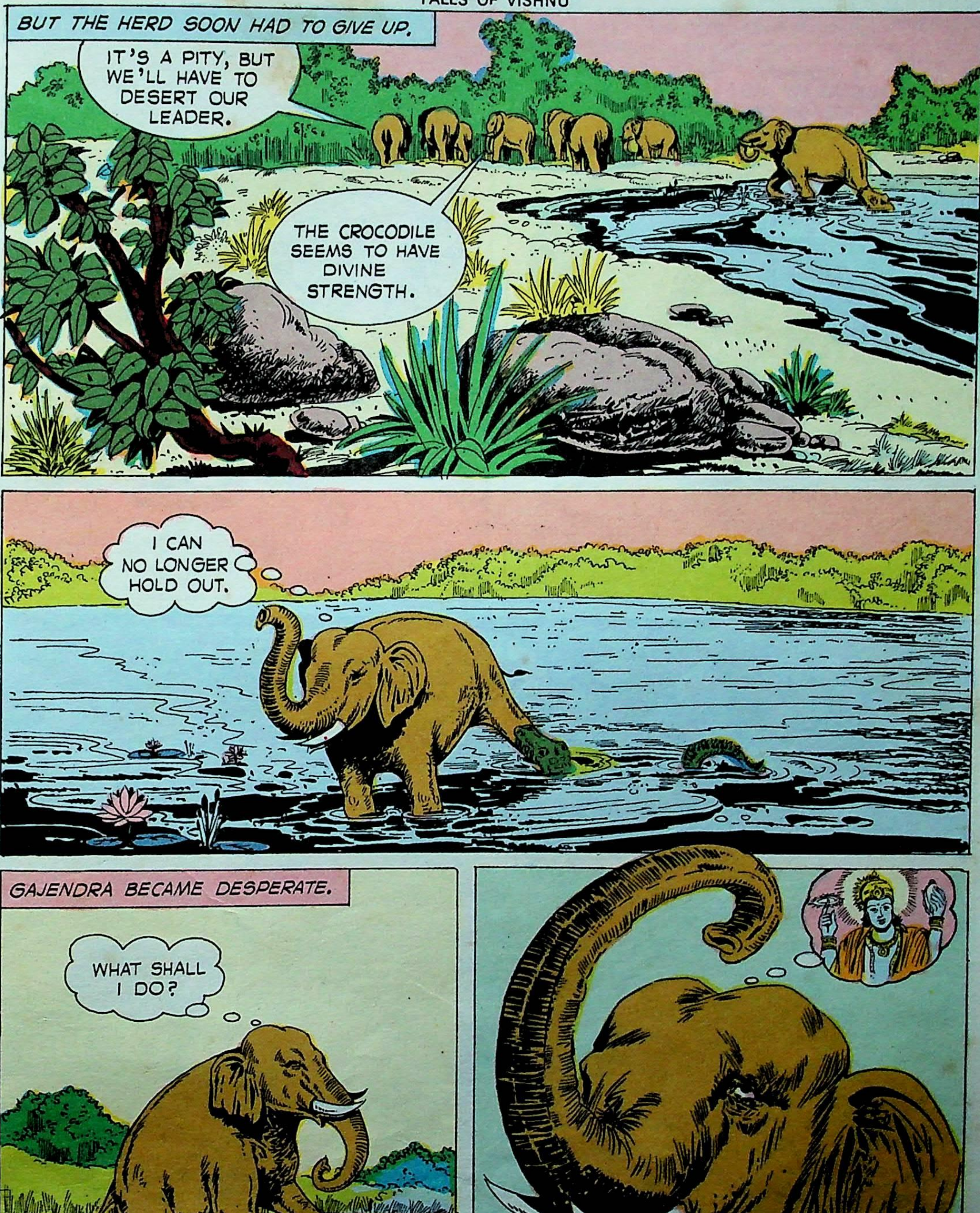
TRUMPETING LOUDLY, HE TRIED TO SHAKE OFF THE CROCODILE.

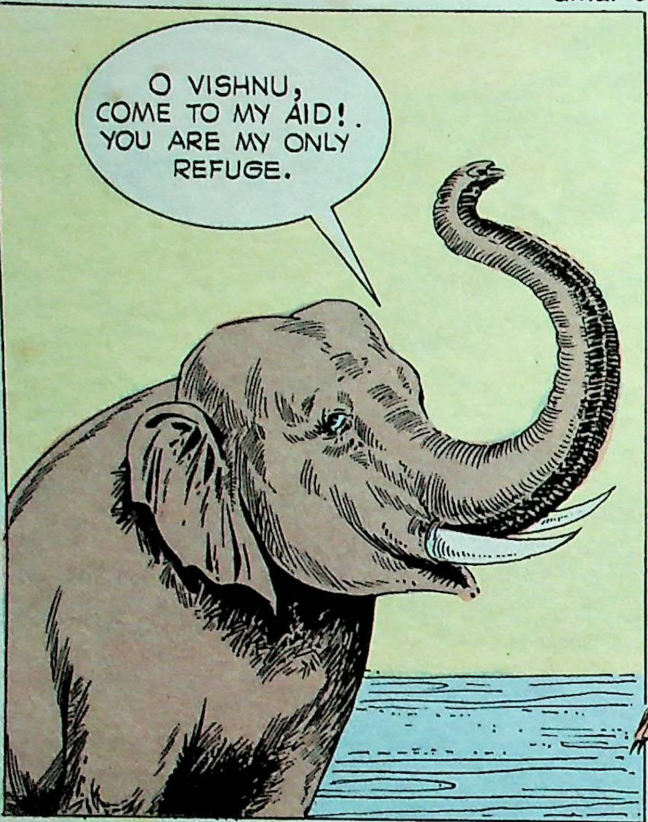


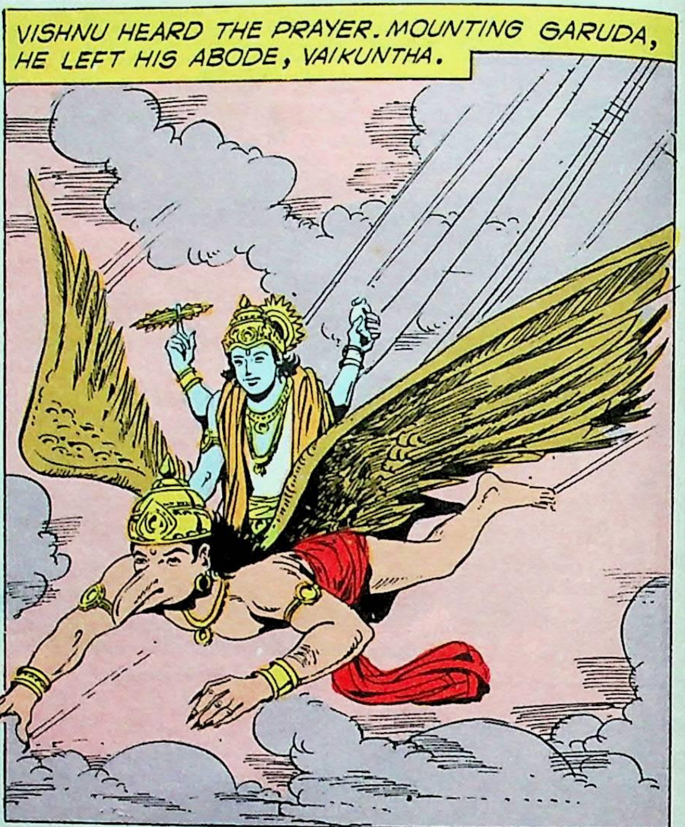
BUT ALL HIS EFFORTS WERE IN VAIN.

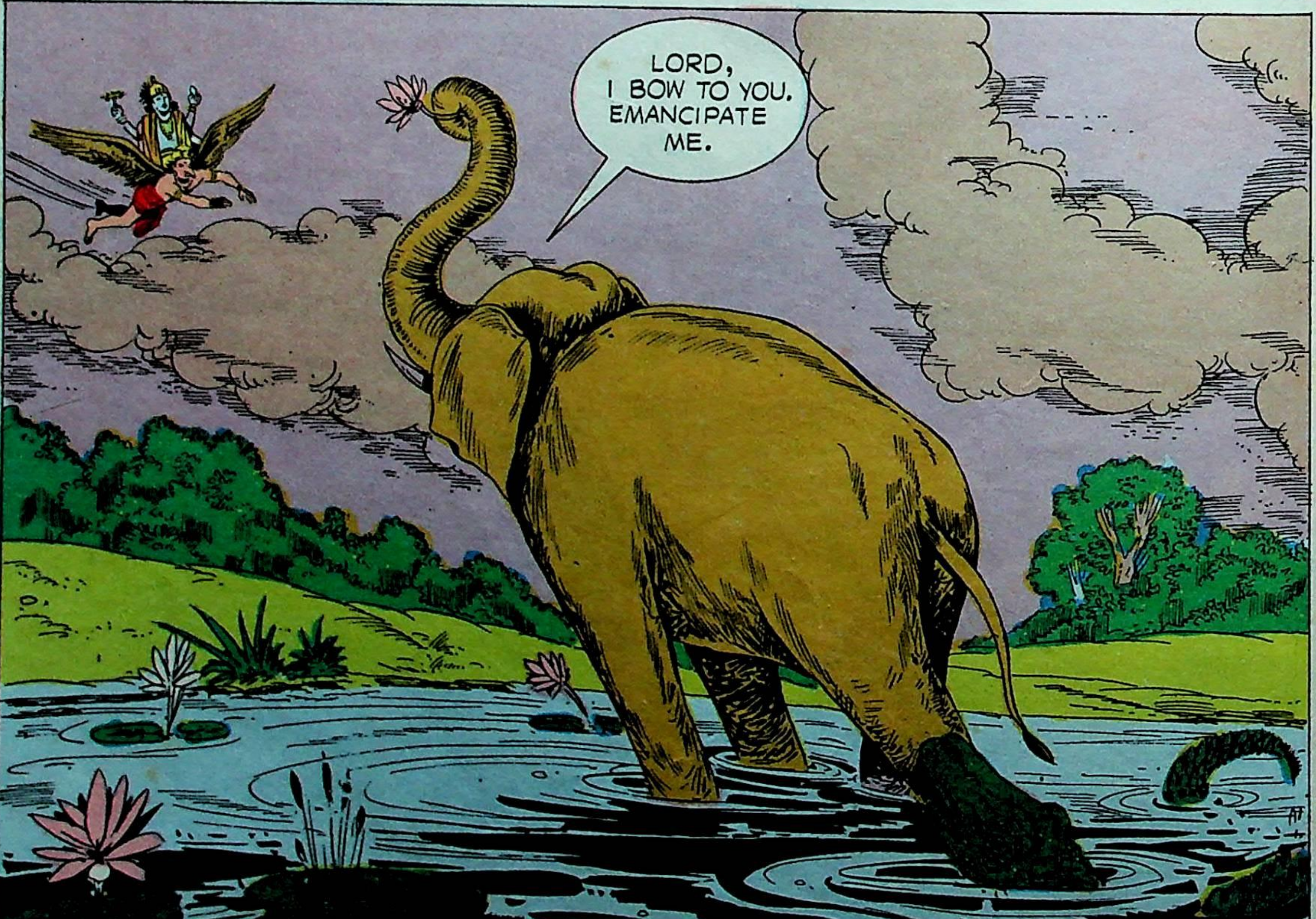

IT'S A CROCODILE. HE'S CAUGHT MY LEG.
WE'RE COMING, MY LORD. WE'LL SAVE YOU.

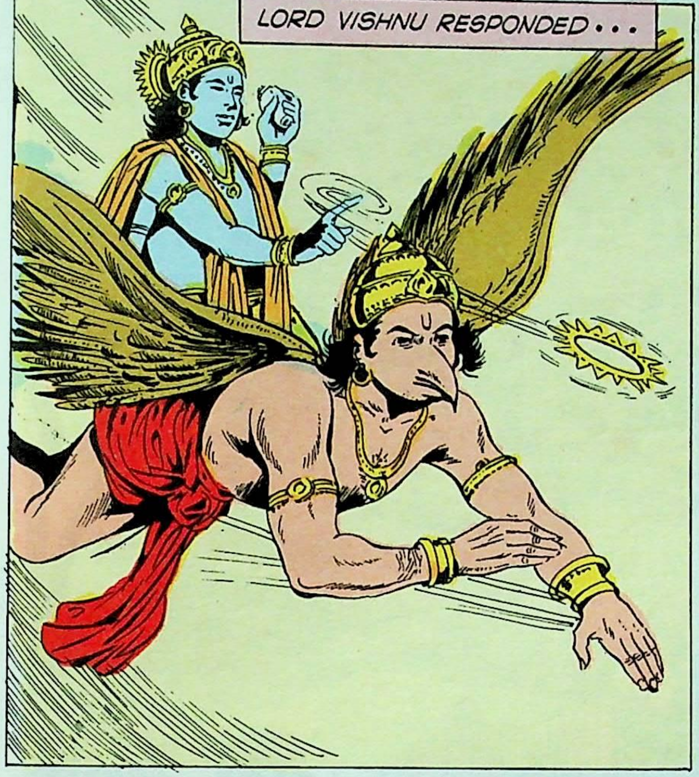



BUT THE HERD SOON HAD TO GIVE UP.
IT'S A PITY, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO DESERT OUR LEADER.
THE CROCODILE SEEMS TO HAVE DIVINE STRENGTH.
I CAN NO LONGER HOLD OUT.
GAJENDRA BECAME DESPERATE.
WHAT SHALL I DO?

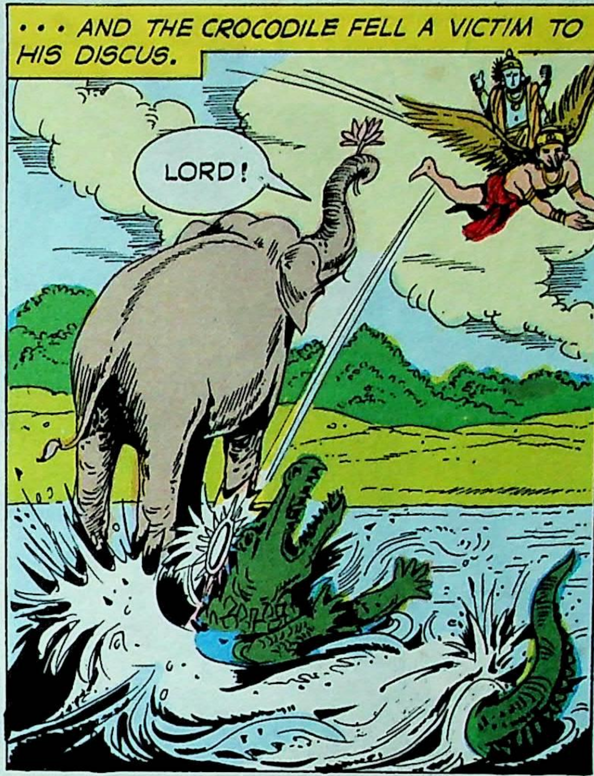

O VISHNU, COME TO MY AID!. YOU ARE MY ONLY REFUGE.


VISHNU HEARD THE PRAYER. MOUNTING GARUDA, HE LEFT HIS ABODE, VAIKUNTHA.

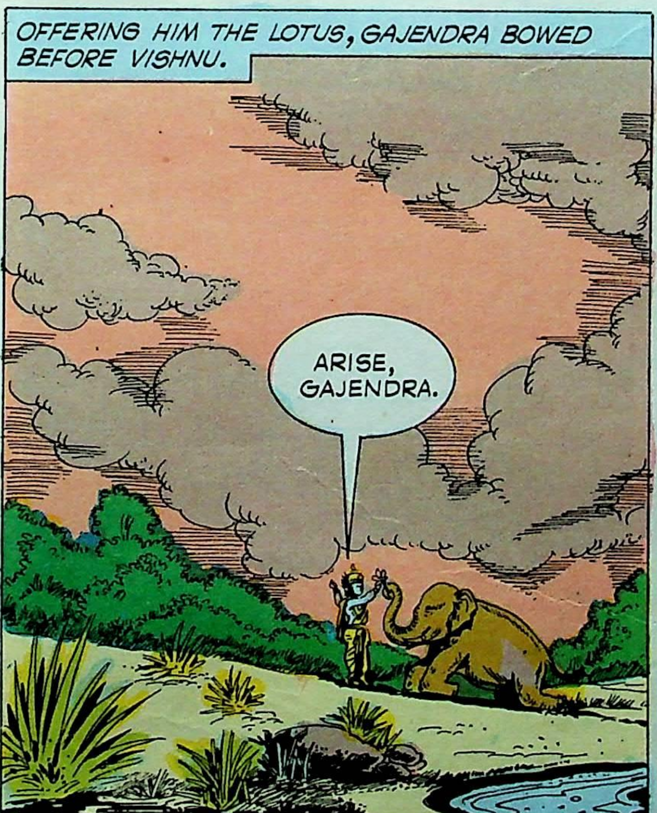

LORD, I BOW TO YOU. EMANCIPATE ME.



LORD VISHNU RESPONDED . . .

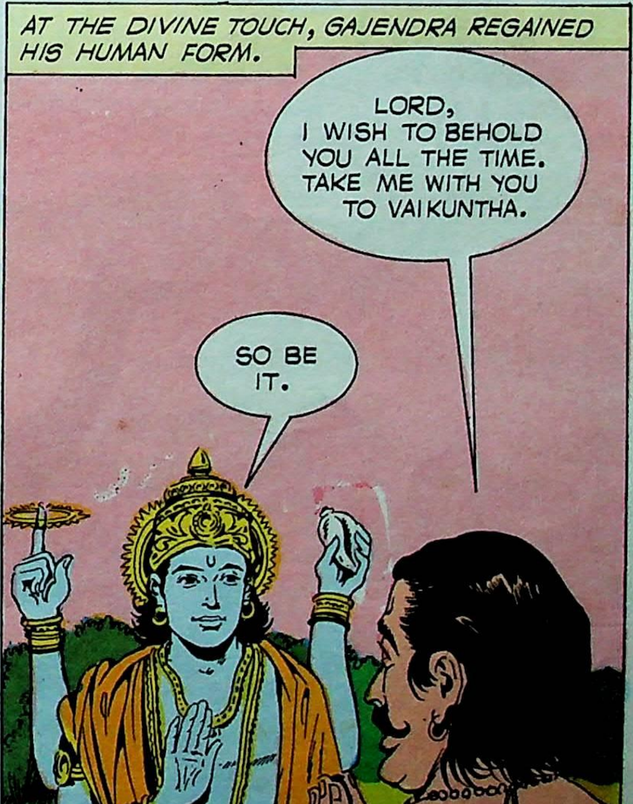


. . . AND THE CROCODILE FELL A VICTIM TO HIS DISCUS.



OFFERING HIM THE LOTUS, GAJENDRA BOWED BEFORE VISHNU.

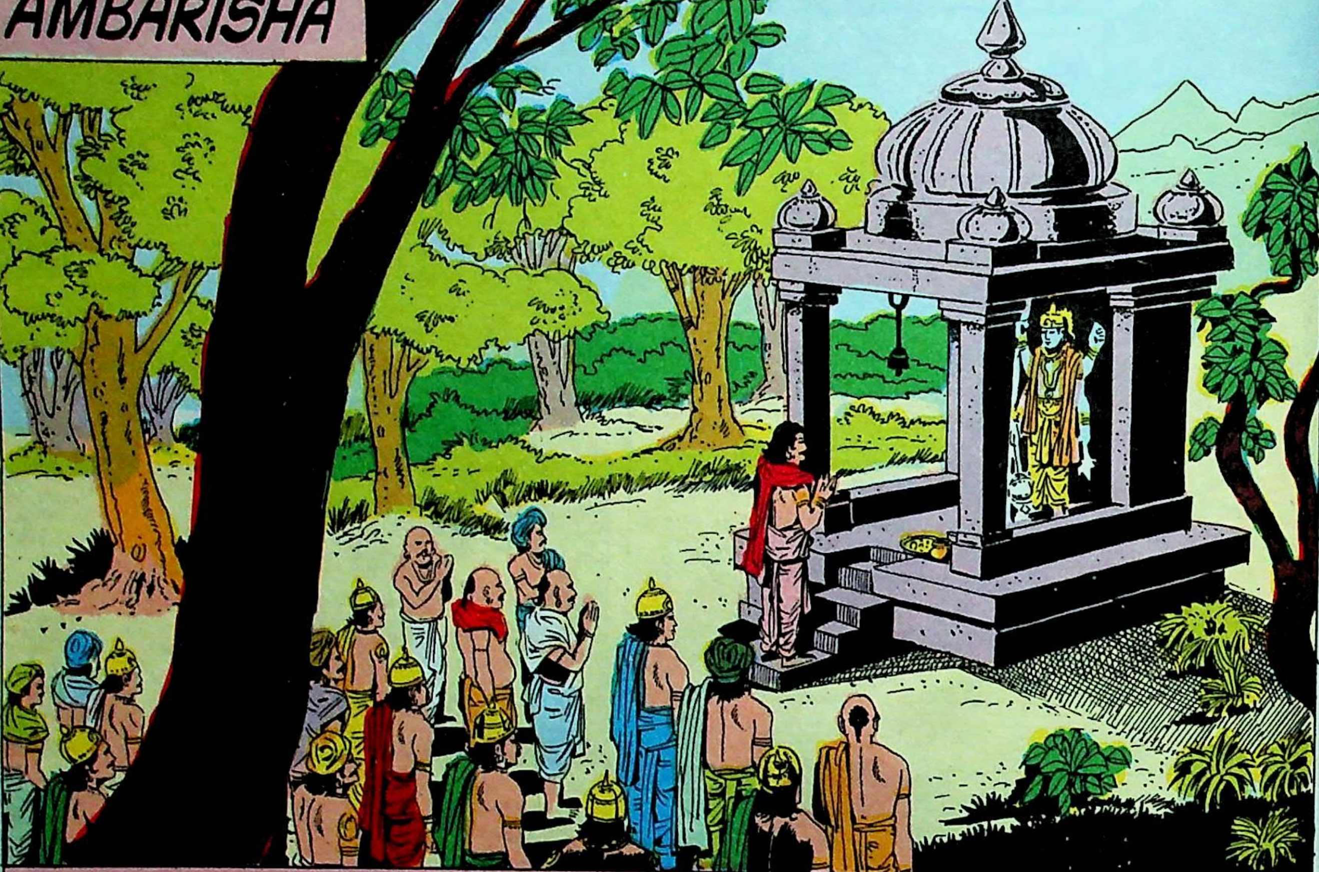
ARISE, GAJENDRA.



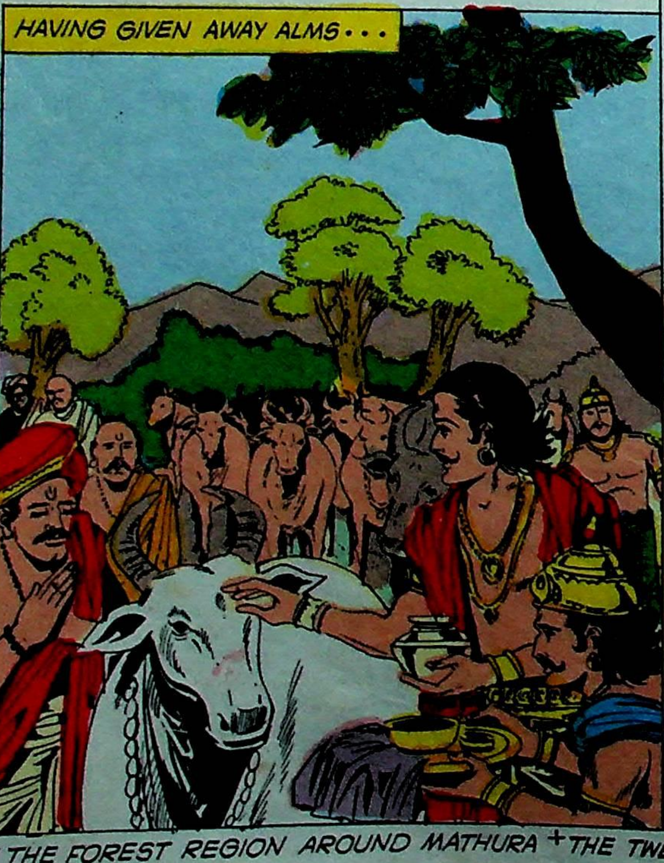
AT THE DIVINE TOUCH, GAJENDRA REGAINED HIS HUMAN FORM.

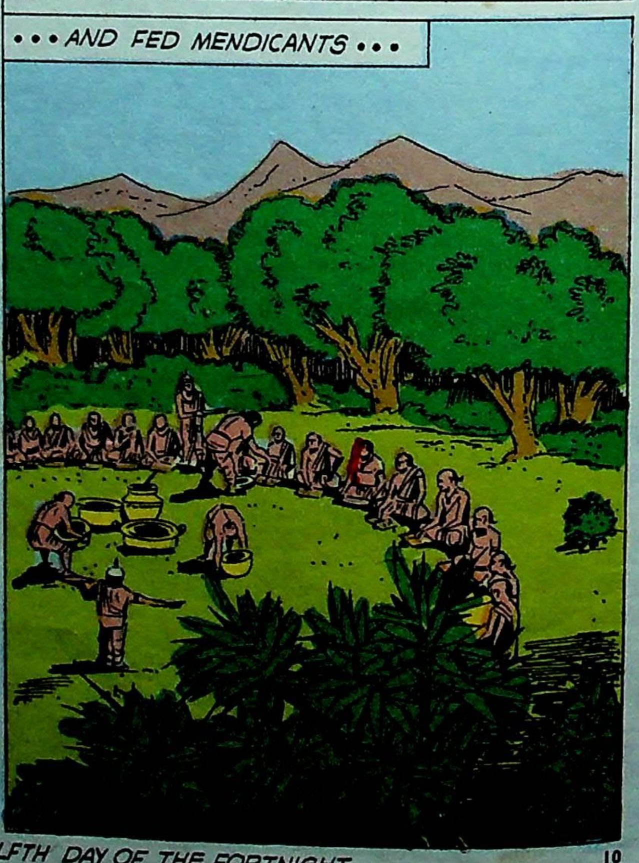
LORD, I WISH TO BEHOLD YOU ALL THE TIME. TAKE ME WITH YOU TO VAIKUNTHA.
SO BE IT.

AMBARISHA



AFTER FASTING FOR THREE DAYS, KING AMBARISHA WORSHIPPED LORD VISHNU IN THE FOREST OF MADHUVANA*. HE WAS TO BREAK HIS FAST ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY OF DWADASHI.+


HAVING GIVEN AWAY ALMS...


...AND FED MENDICANTS...

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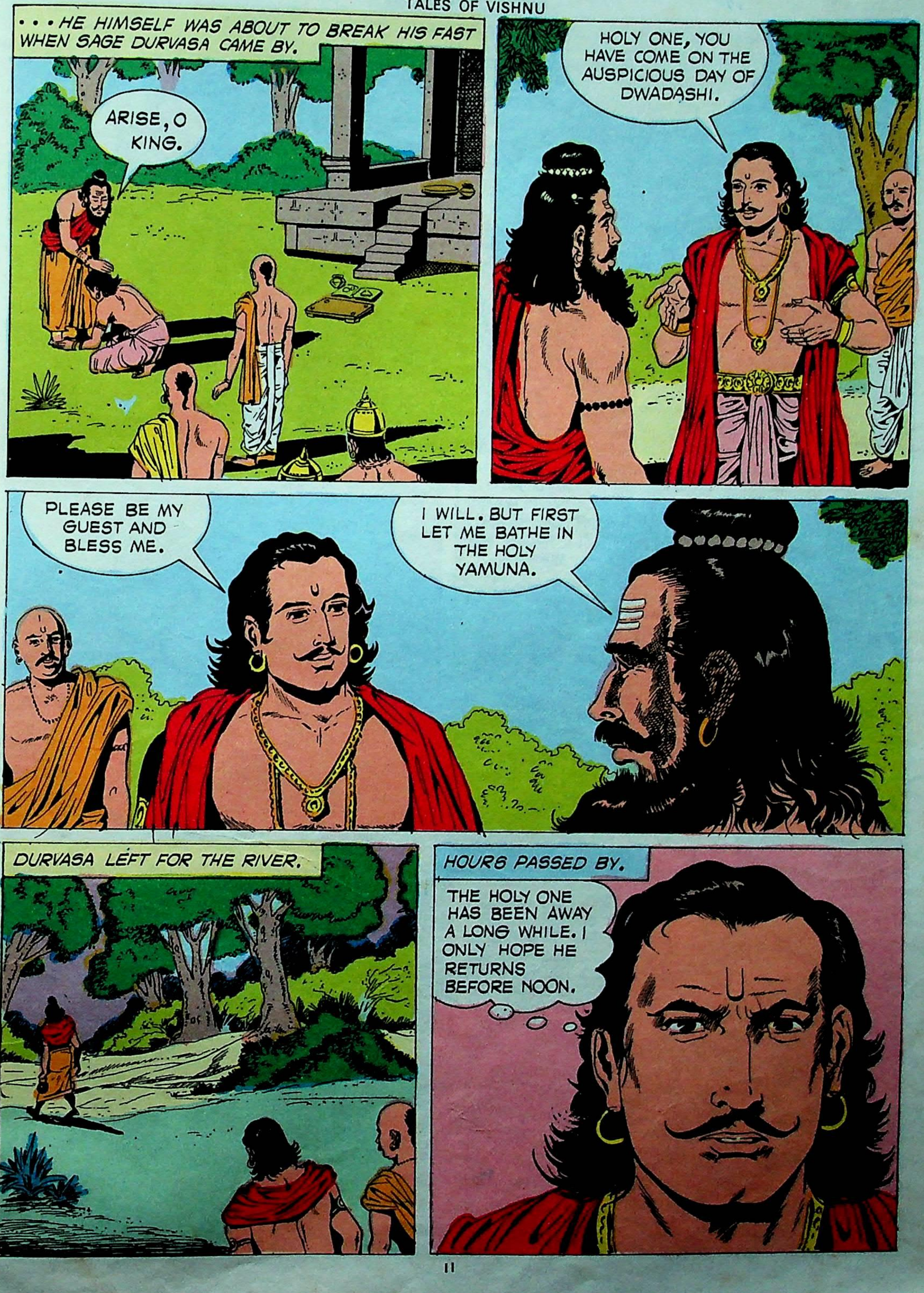
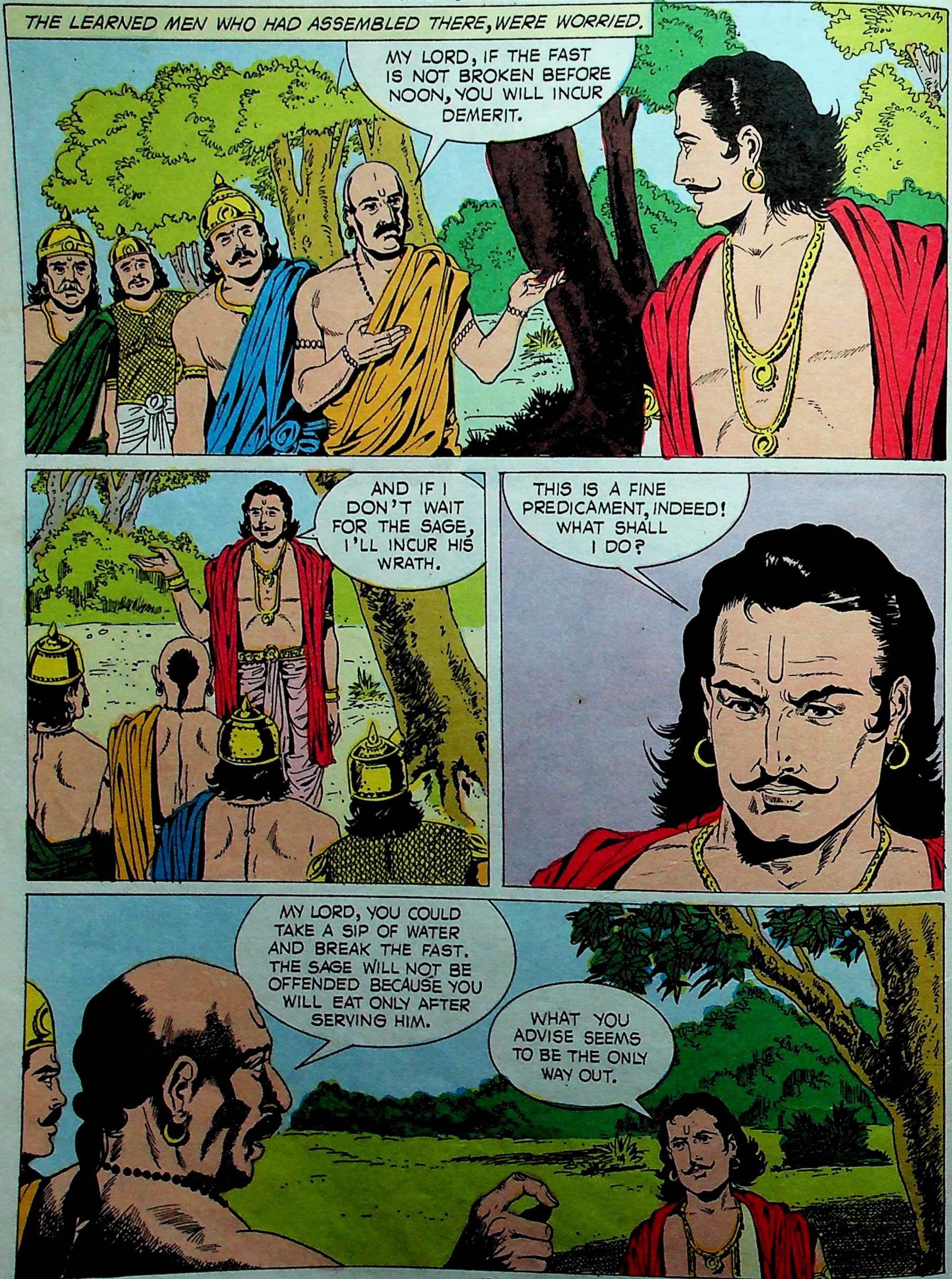
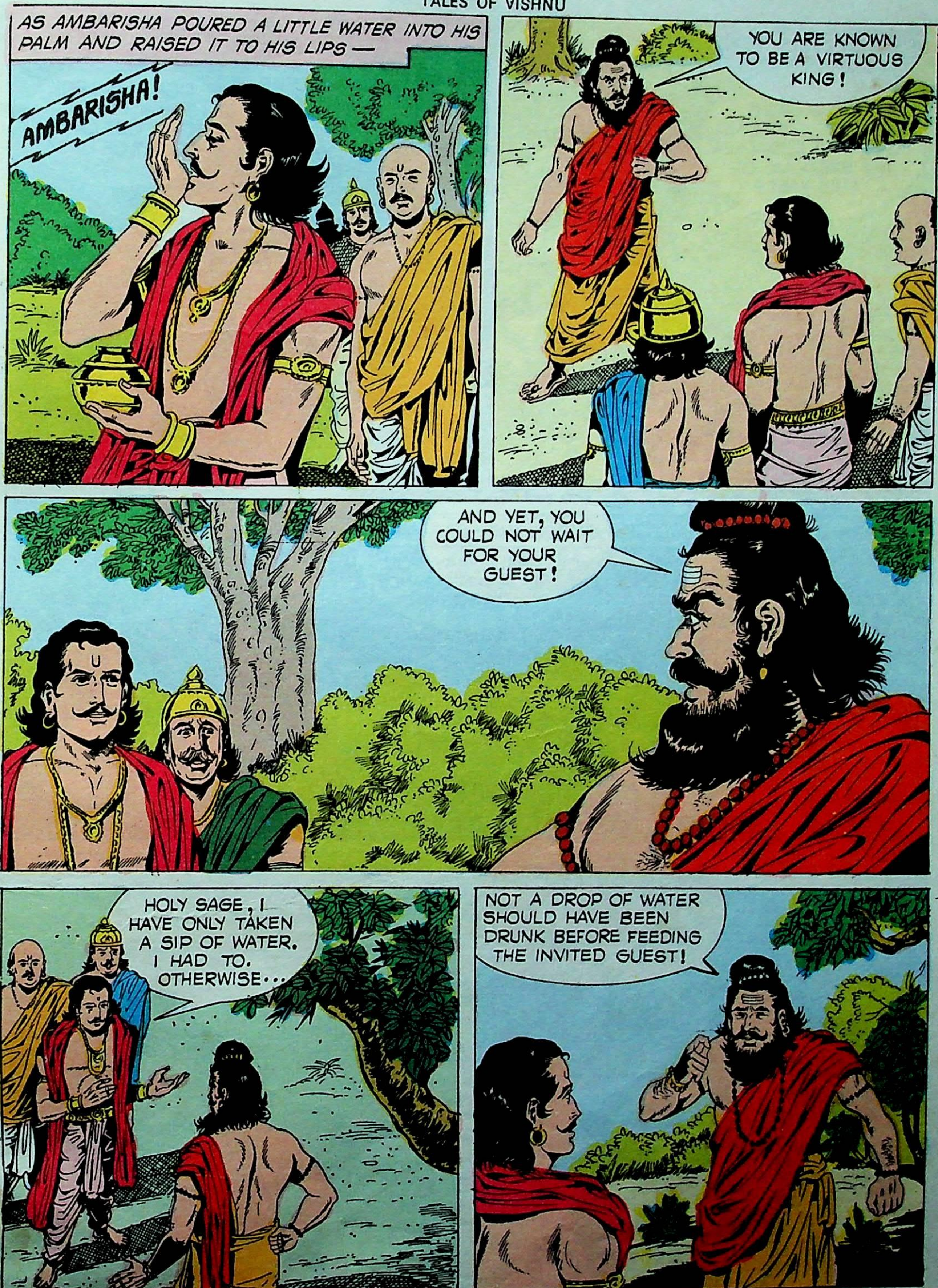
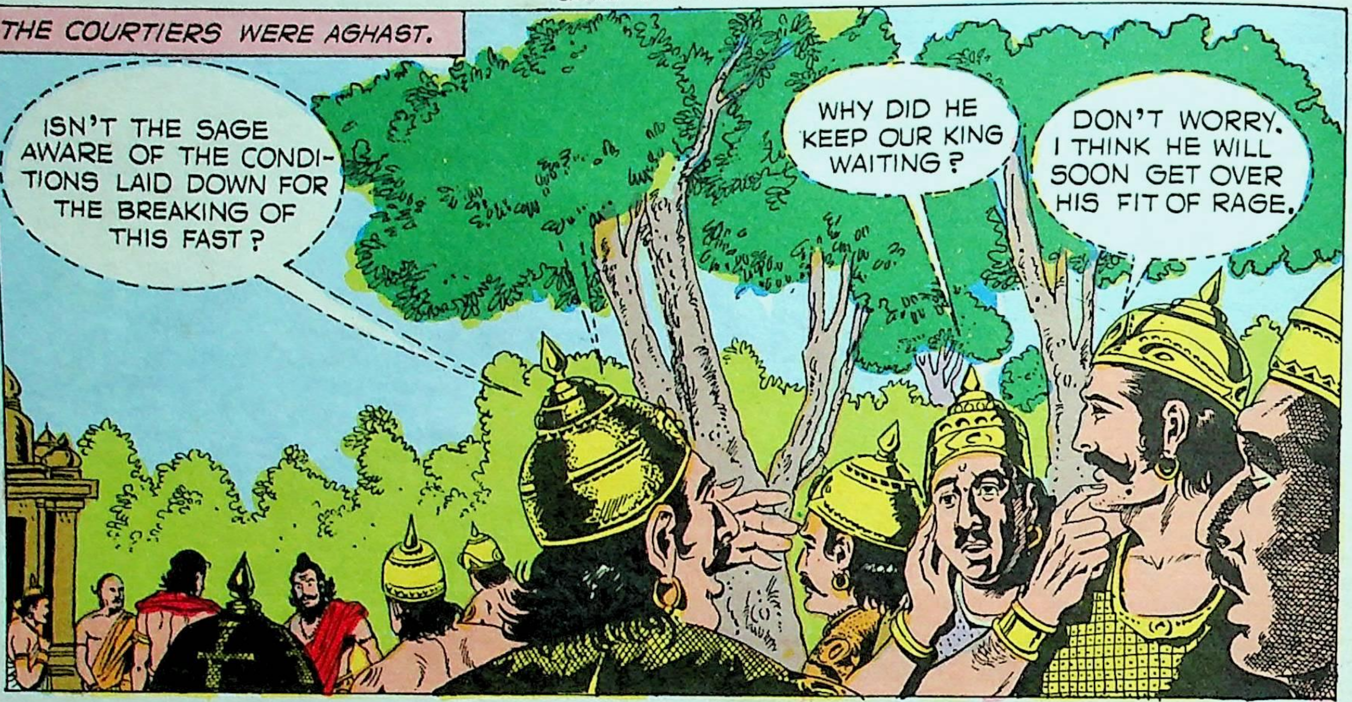
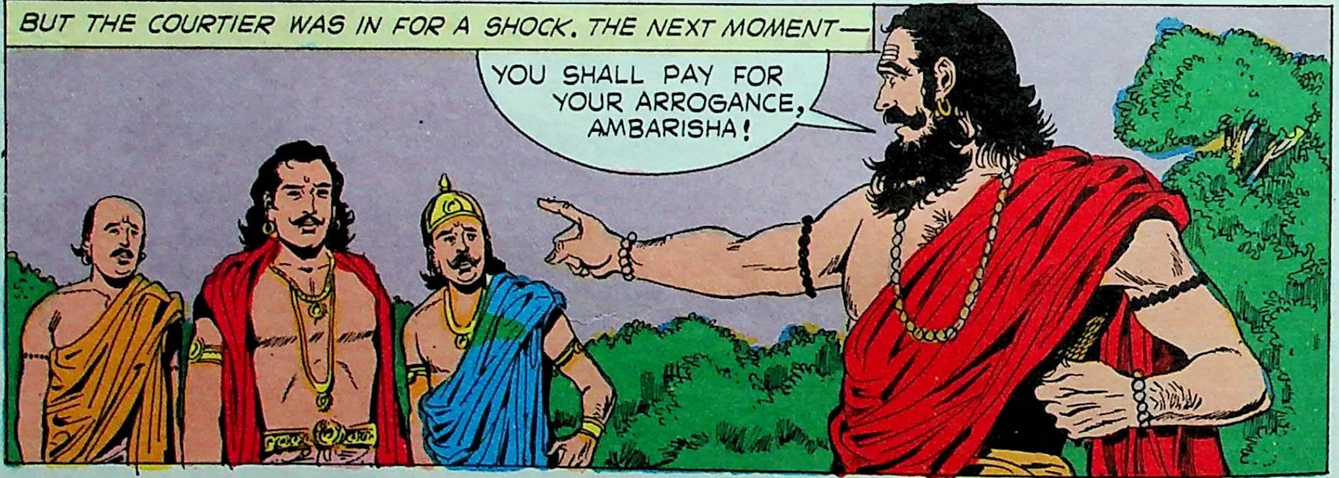
* THE FOREST REGION AROUND MATHURA + THE TWELFTH DAY OF THE FORTNIGHT

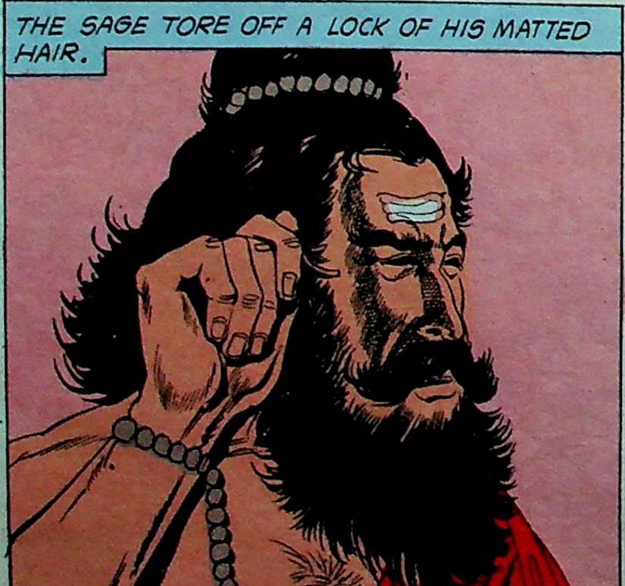

...HE HIMSELF WAS ABOUT TO BREAK HIS FAST WHEN SAGE DURVASA CAME BY.
ARISE, O KING.
HOLY ONE, YOU HAVE COME ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY OF DWADASHI.
PLEASE BE MY GUEST AND BLESS ME.
I WILL. BUT FIRST LET ME BATHE IN THE HOLY YAMUNA.
DURVASA LEFT FOR THE RIVER.
HOURS PASSED BY.
THE HOLY ONE HAS BEEN AWAY A LONG WHILE. I ONLY HOPE HE RETURNS BEFORE NOON.

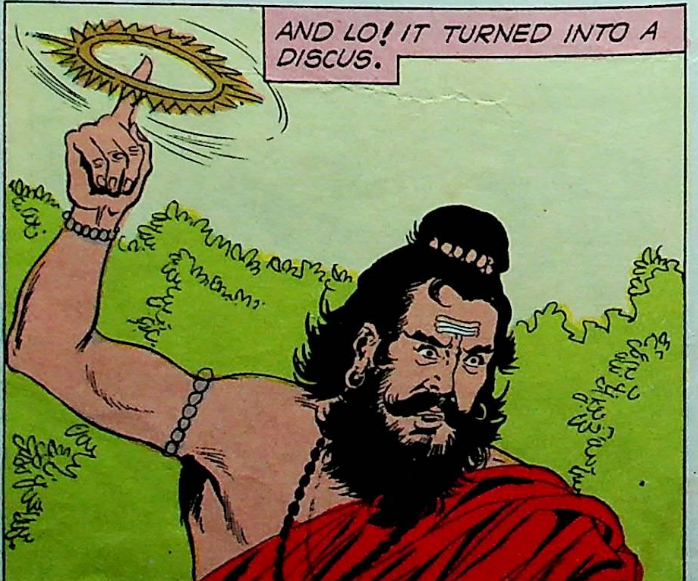

THE LEARNED MEN WHO HAD ASSEMBLED THERE, WERE WORRIED.
MY LORD, IF THE FAST IS NOT BROKEN BEFORE NOON, YOU WILL INCUR DEMERIT.
AND IF I DON'T WAIT FOR THE SAGE, I'LL INCUR HIS WRATH.
THIS IS A FINE PREDICAMENT, INDEED! WHAT SHALL I DO?
MY LORD, YOU COULD TAKE A SIP OF WATER AND BREAK THE FAST. THE SAGE WILL NOT BE OFFENDED BECAUSE YOU WILL EAT ONLY AFTER SERVING HIM.
WHAT YOU ADVISE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY WAY OUT.

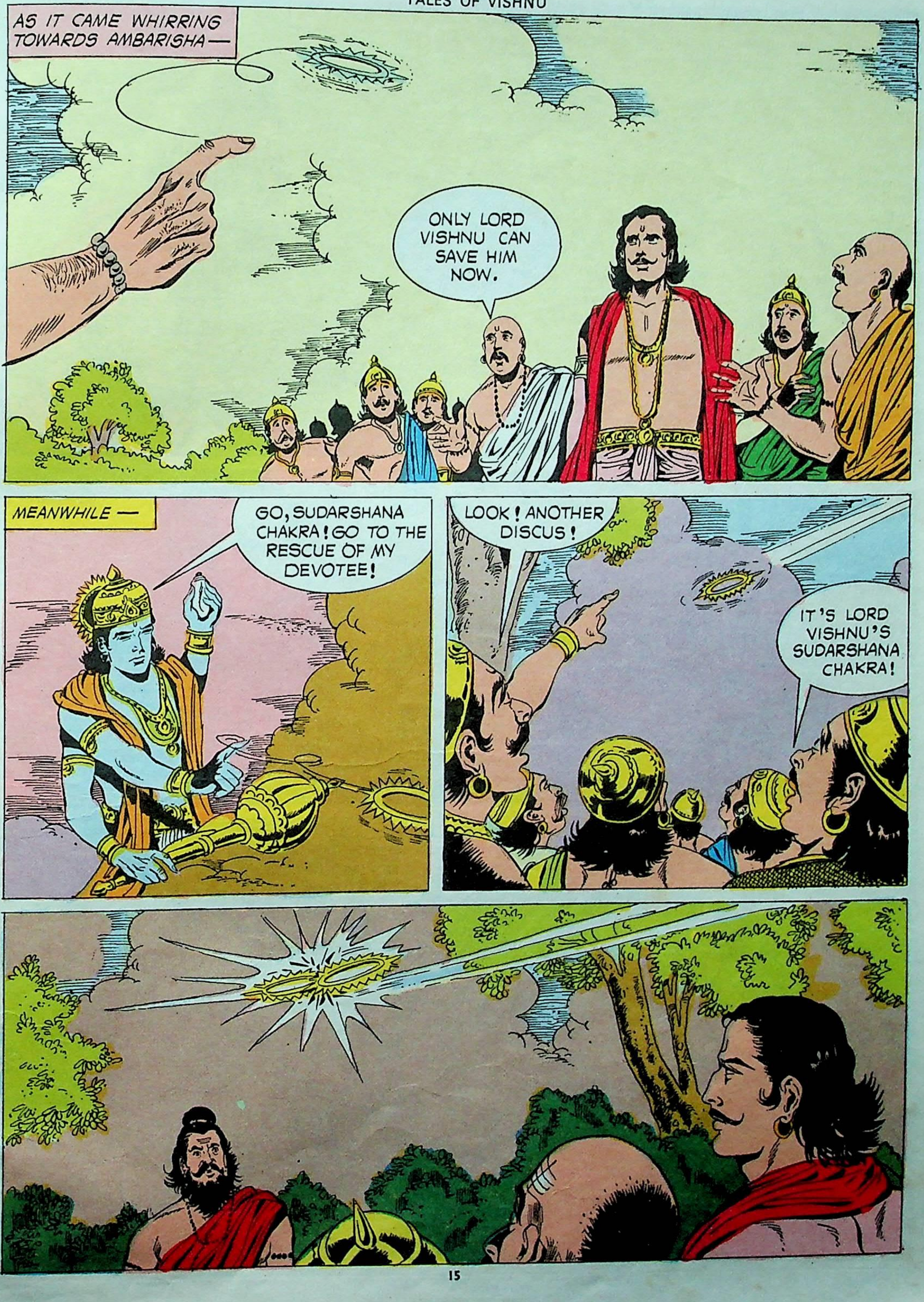

AS AMBARISHA POURED A LITTLE WATER INTO HIS PALM AND RAISED IT TO HIS LIPS —
AMBARISHA!
YOU ARE KNOWN TO BE A VIRTUOUS KING!
AND YET, YOU COULD NOT WAIT FOR YOUR GUEST!
HOLY SAGE, I HAVE ONLY TAKEN A SIP OF WATER. I HAD TO. OTHERWISE...
NOT A DROP OF WATER SHOULD HAVE BEEN DRUNK BEFORE FEEDING THE INVITED GUEST!

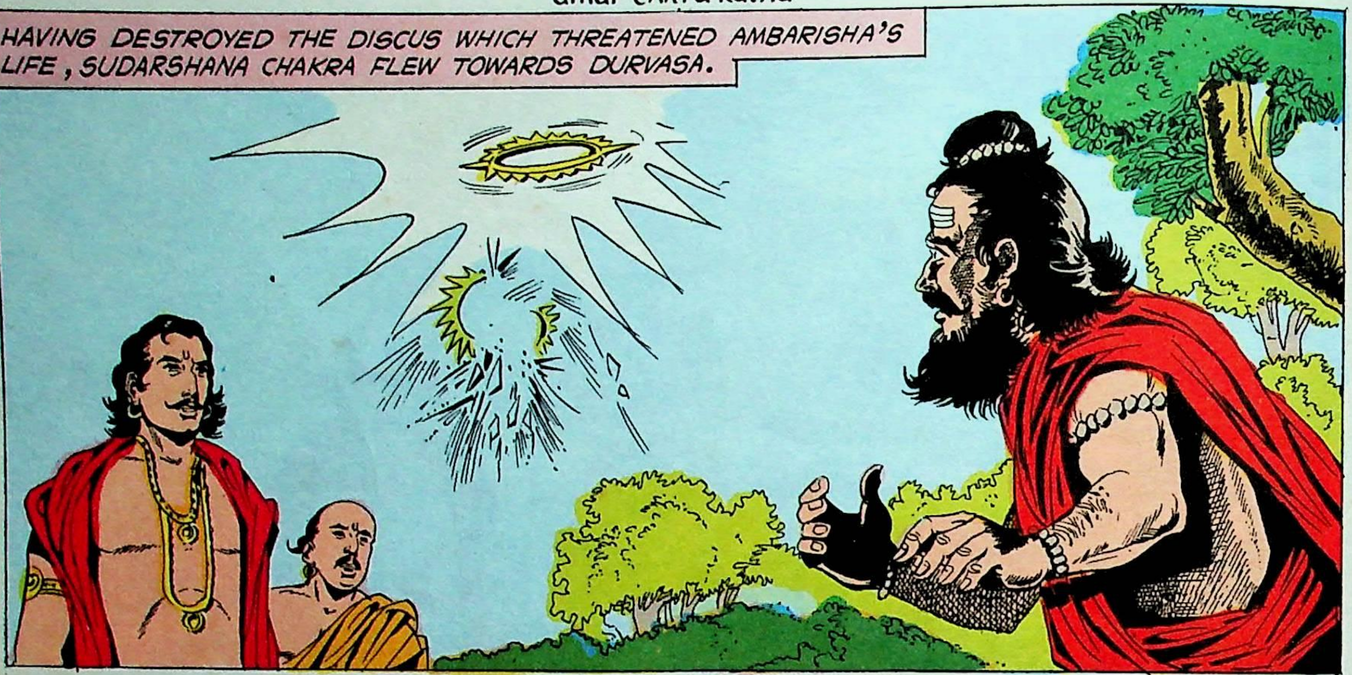

THE COURTIERS WERE AGHAST.
ISN'T THE SAGE AWARE OF THE CONDITIONS LAID DOWN FOR THE BREAKING OF THIS FAST?
WHY DID HE KEEP OUR KING WAITING?
DON'T WORRY. I THINK HE WILL SOON GET OVER HIS FIT OF RAGE.


BUT THE COURTIER WAS IN FOR A SHOCK. THE NEXT MOMENT—
YOU SHALL PAY FOR YOUR ARROGANCE, AMBARISHA!

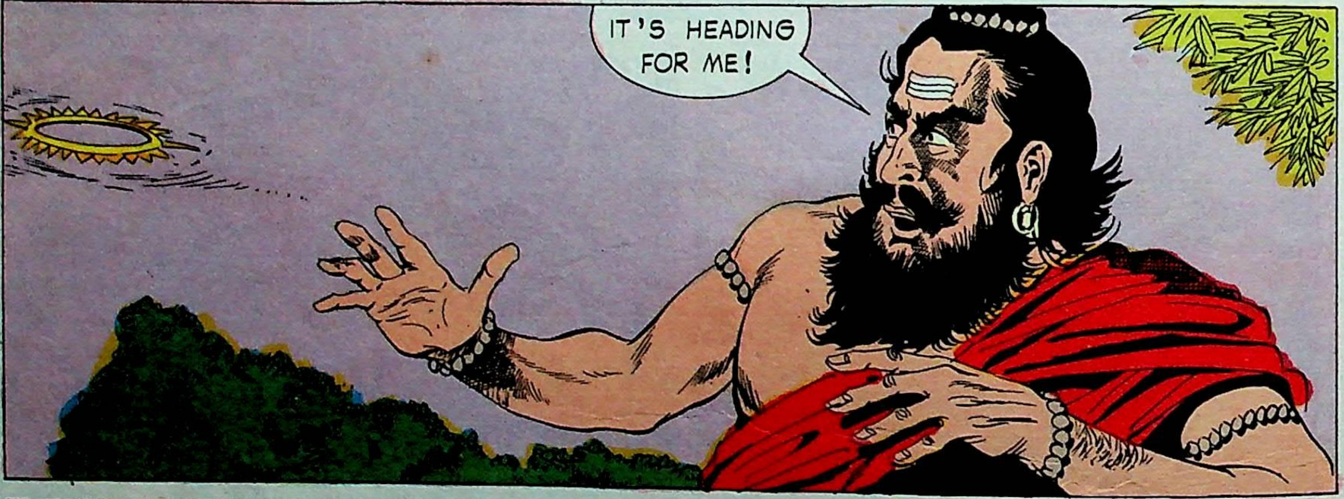

THE SAGE TORE OFF A LOCK OF HIS MATTED HAIR.


AND LO! IT TURNED INTO A DISCUS.

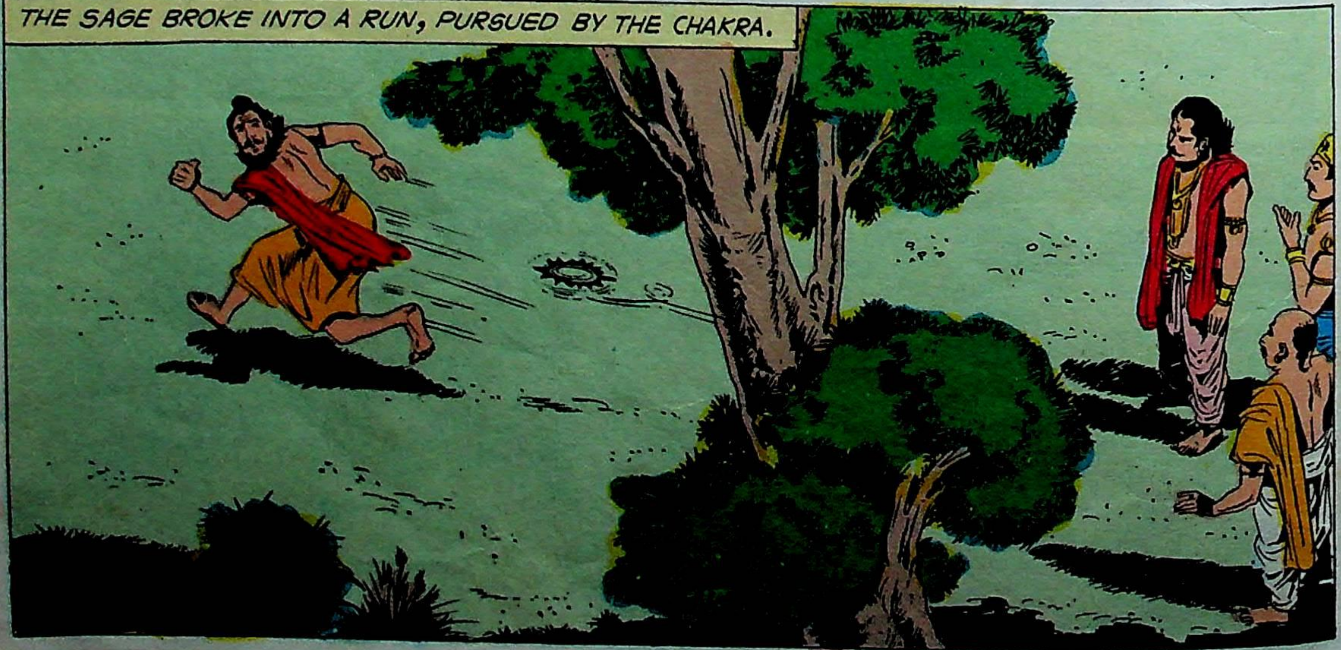

AS IT CAME WHIRRING TOWARDS AMBARISHA—
ONLY LORD VISHNU CAN SAVE HIM NOW.
MEANWHILE—
GO, SUDARSHANA CHAKRA! GO TO THE RESCUE OF MY DEVOTEE!
LOOK! ANOTHER DISCUS!
IT'S LORD VISHNU'S SUDARSHANA CHAKRA!



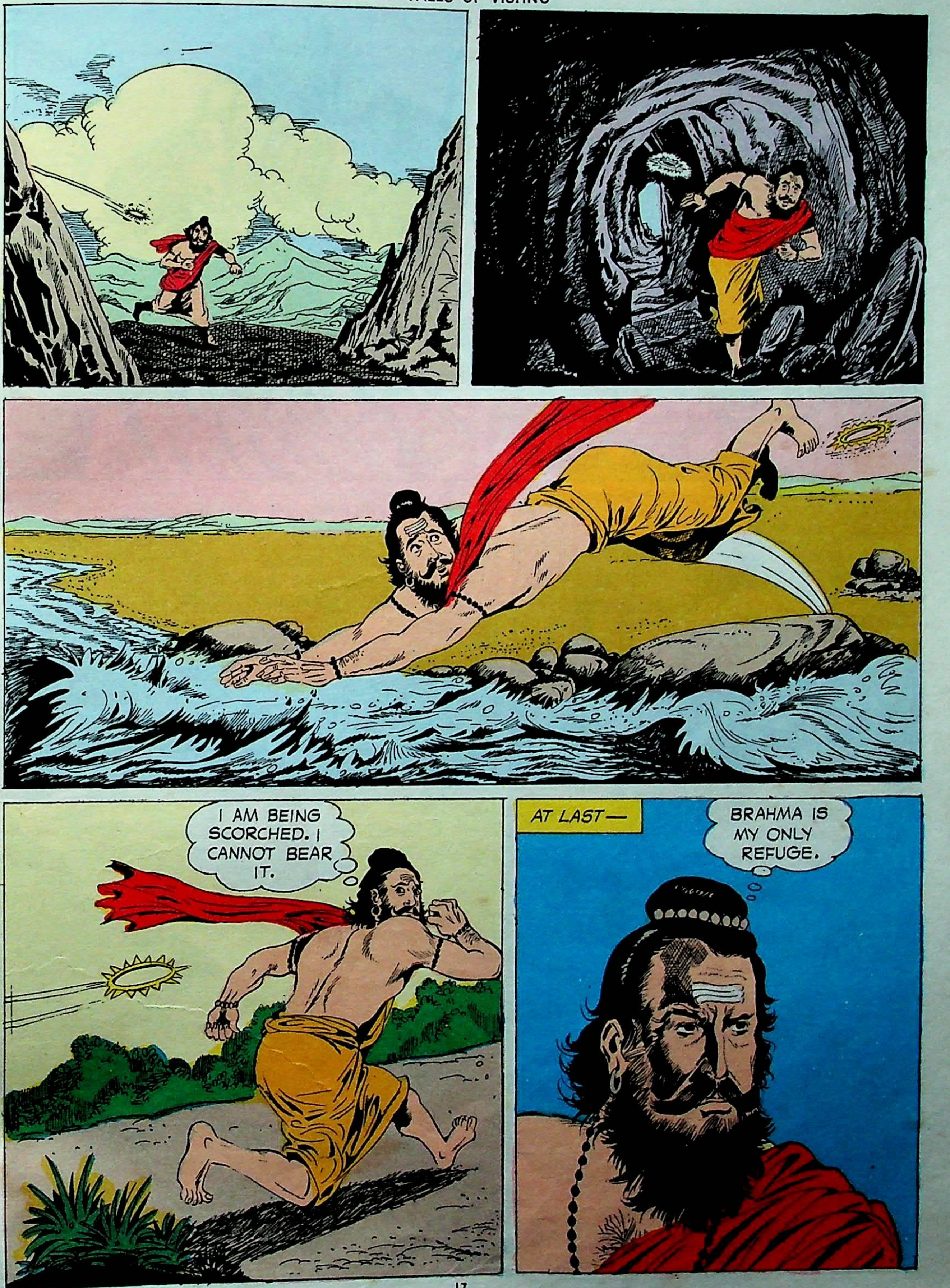
HAVING DESTROYED THE DISCUS WHICH THREATENED AMBARISHA'S LIFE, SUDARSHANA CHAKRA FLEW TOWARDS DURVASA.

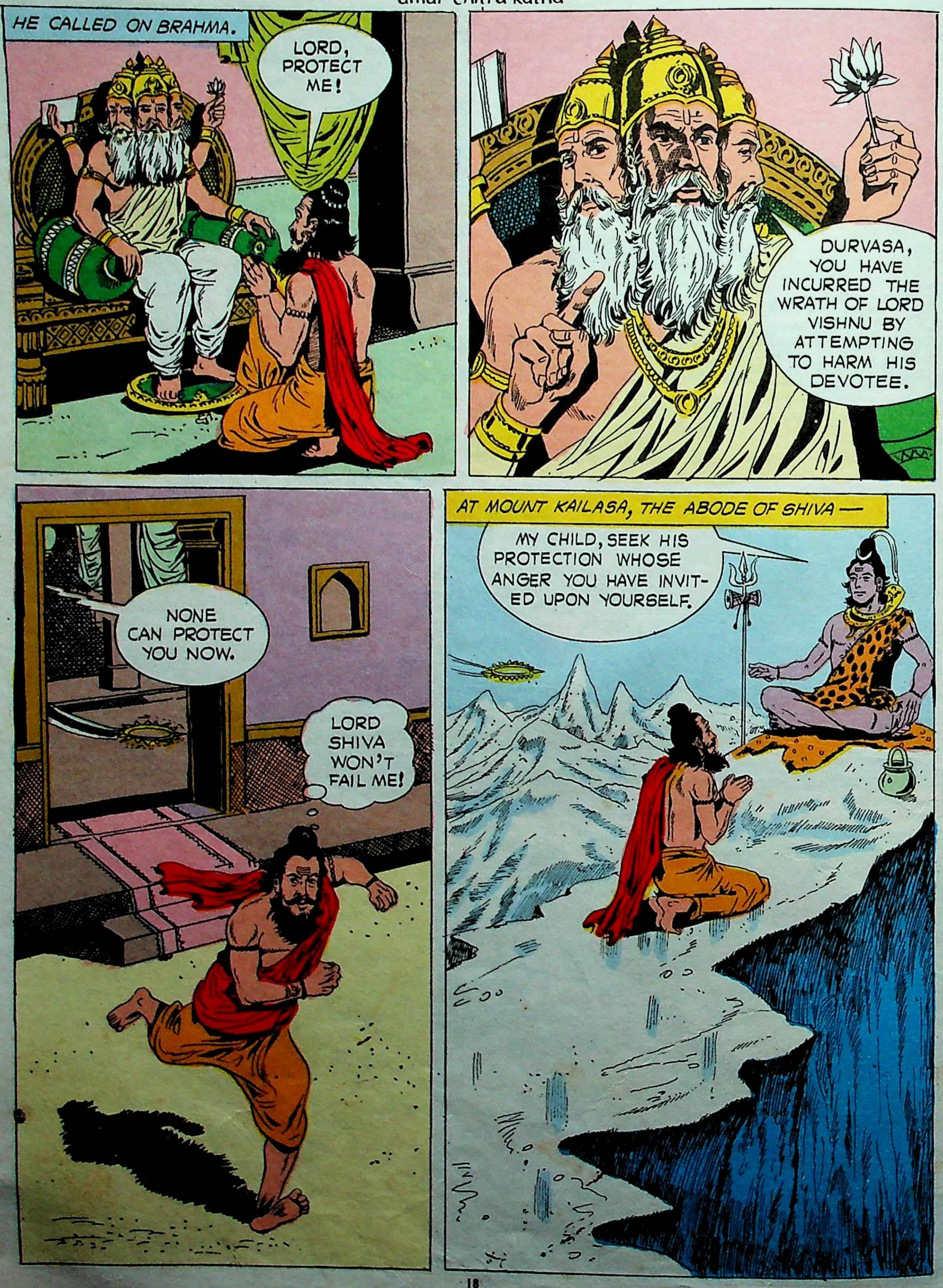


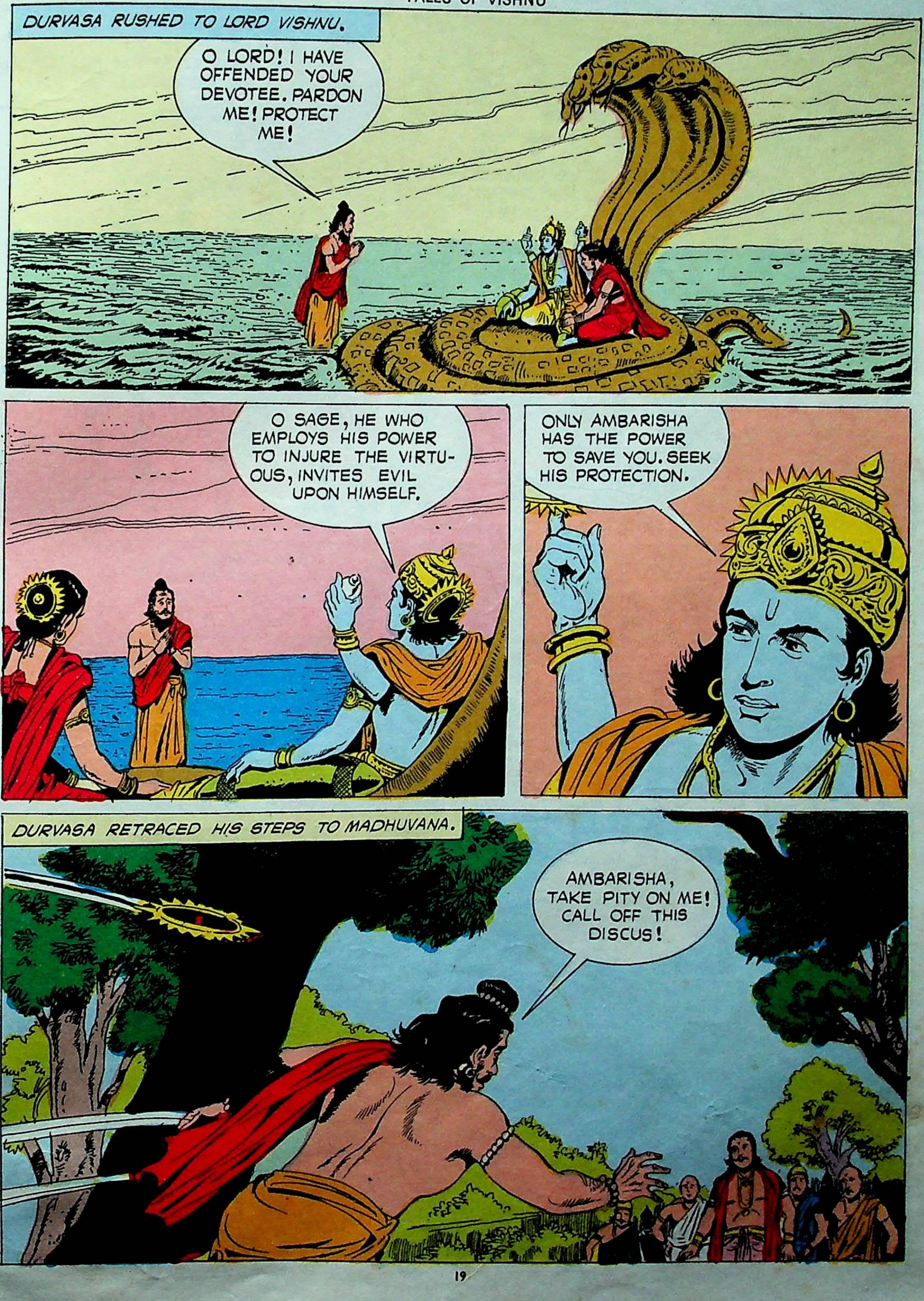
IT'S HEADING FOR ME!



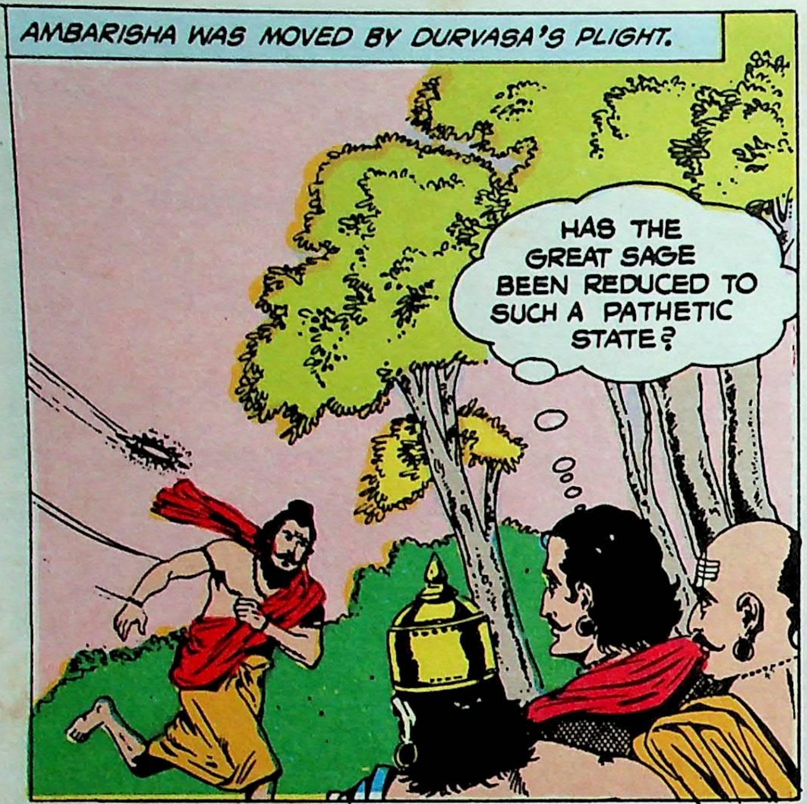
THE SAGE BROKE INTO A RUN, PURSUED BY THE CHAKRA.


I AM BEING SCORCHED. I CANNOT BEAR IT.
AT LAST—
BRAHMA IS MY ONLY REFUGE.

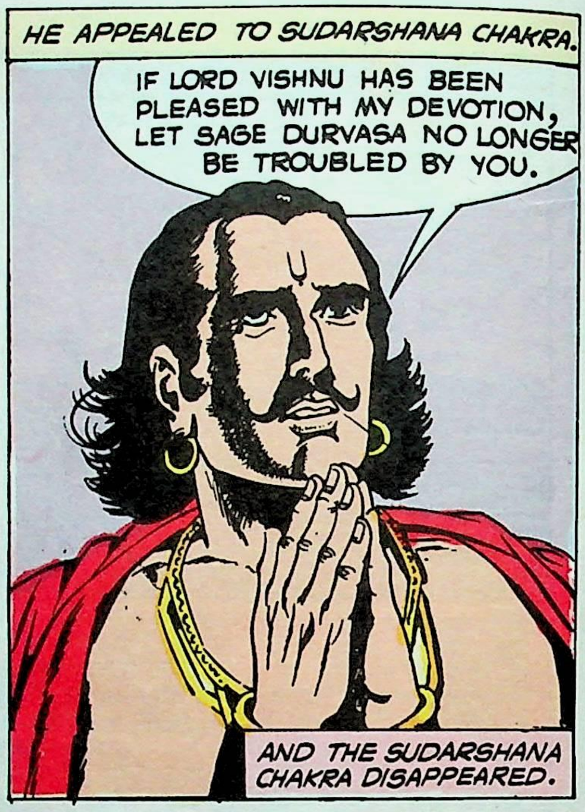

HE CALLED ON BRAHMA.
LORD, PROTECT ME!
DURVASA, YOU HAVE INCURRED THE WRATH OF LORD VISHNU BY ATTEMPTING TO HARM HIS DEVOTEE.
NONE CAN PROTECT YOU NOW.
LORD SHIVA WON'T FAIL ME!
AT MOUNT KAILASA, THE ABODE OF SHIVA —
MY CHILD, SEEK HIS PROTECTION WHOSE ANGER YOU HAVE INVITED UPON YOURSELF.


DURVASA RUSHED TO LORD VISHNU.
O LORD! I HAVE OFFENDED YOUR DEVOTEE. PARDON ME! PROTECT ME!
O SAGE, HE WHO EMPLOYS HIS POWER TO INJURE THE VIRTUOUS, INVITES EVIL UPON HIMSELF.
ONLY AMBARISHA HAS THE POWER TO SAVE YOU. SEEK HIS PROTECTION.
DURVASA RETRACED HIS STEPS TO MADHUVANA.
AMBARISHA, TAKE PITY ON ME! CALL OFF THIS DISCUS!

AMBARISHA WAS MOVED BY DURVASA'S PLIGHT.

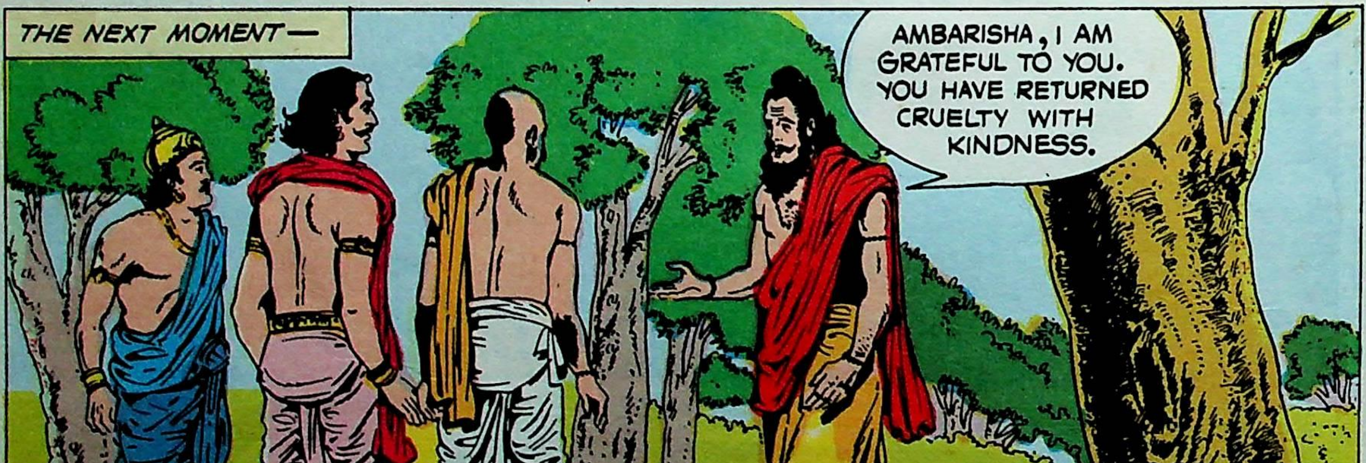

HAS THE GREAT SAGE BEEN REDUCED TO SUCH A PATHETIC STATE?

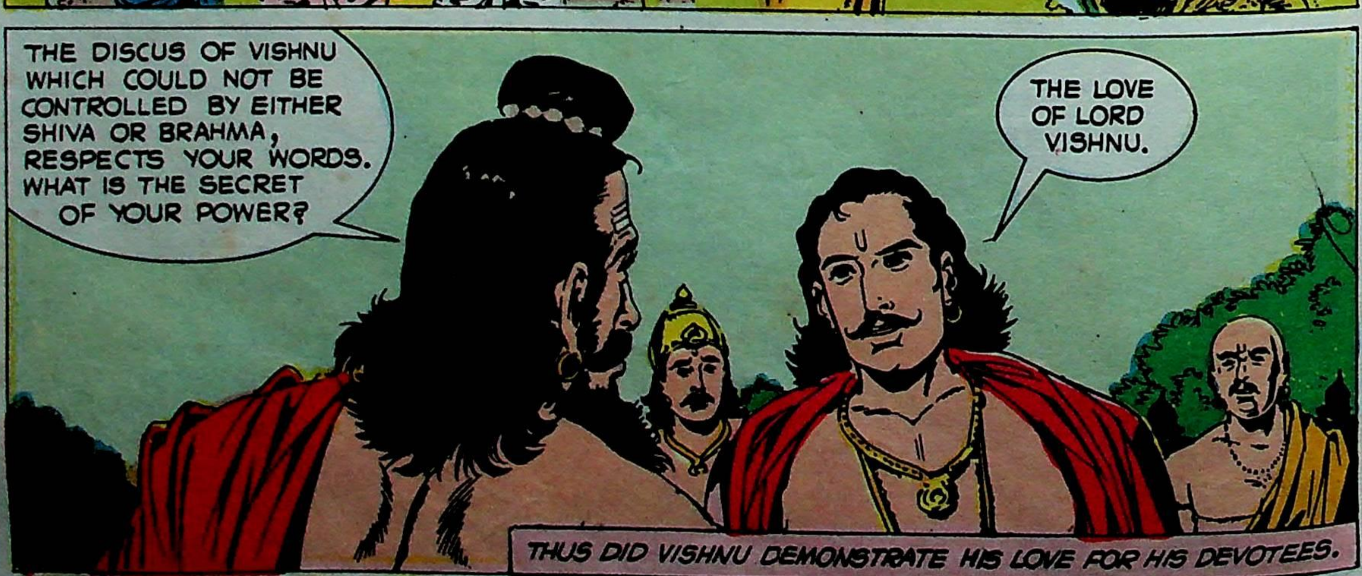
HE APPEALED TO SUDARSHANA CHAKRA.


IF LORD VISHNU HAS BEEN PLEASED WITH MY DEVOTION, LET SAGE DURVASA NO LONGER BE TROUBLED BY YOU.

AND THE SUDARSHANA CHAKRA DISAPPEARED.

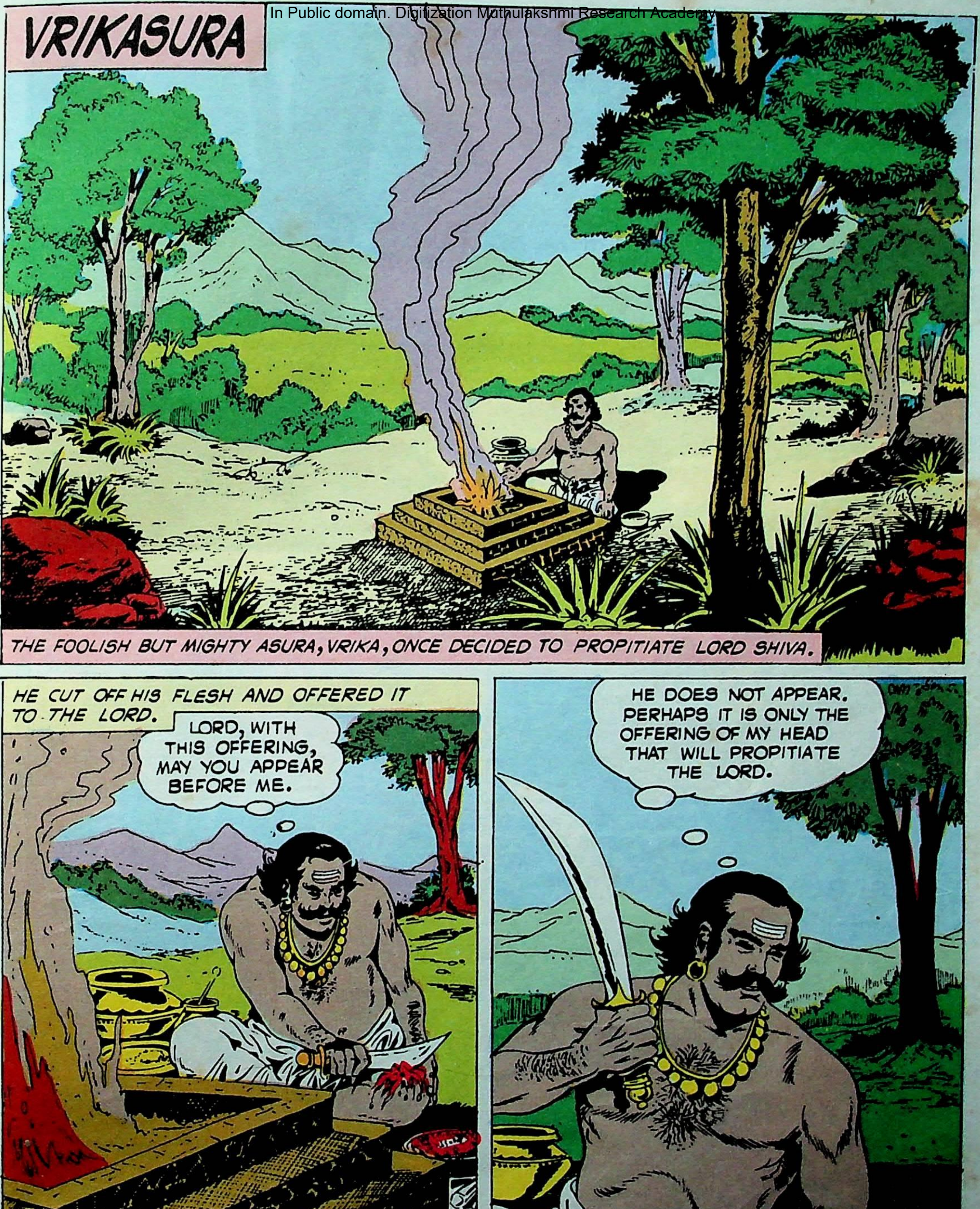
THE NEXT MOMENT—

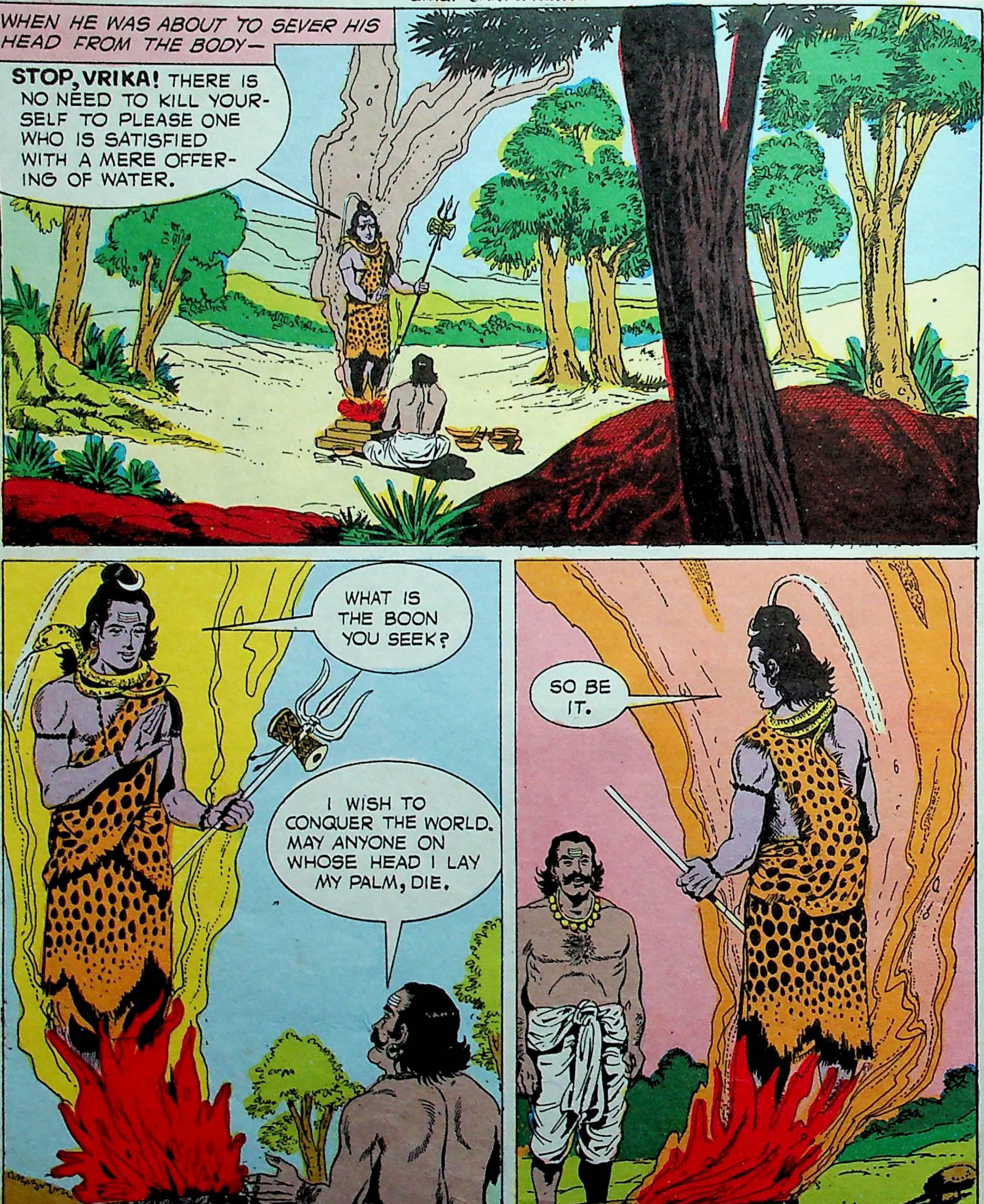

AMBARISHA, I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU. YOU HAVE RETURNED CRUELTY WITH KINDNESS.

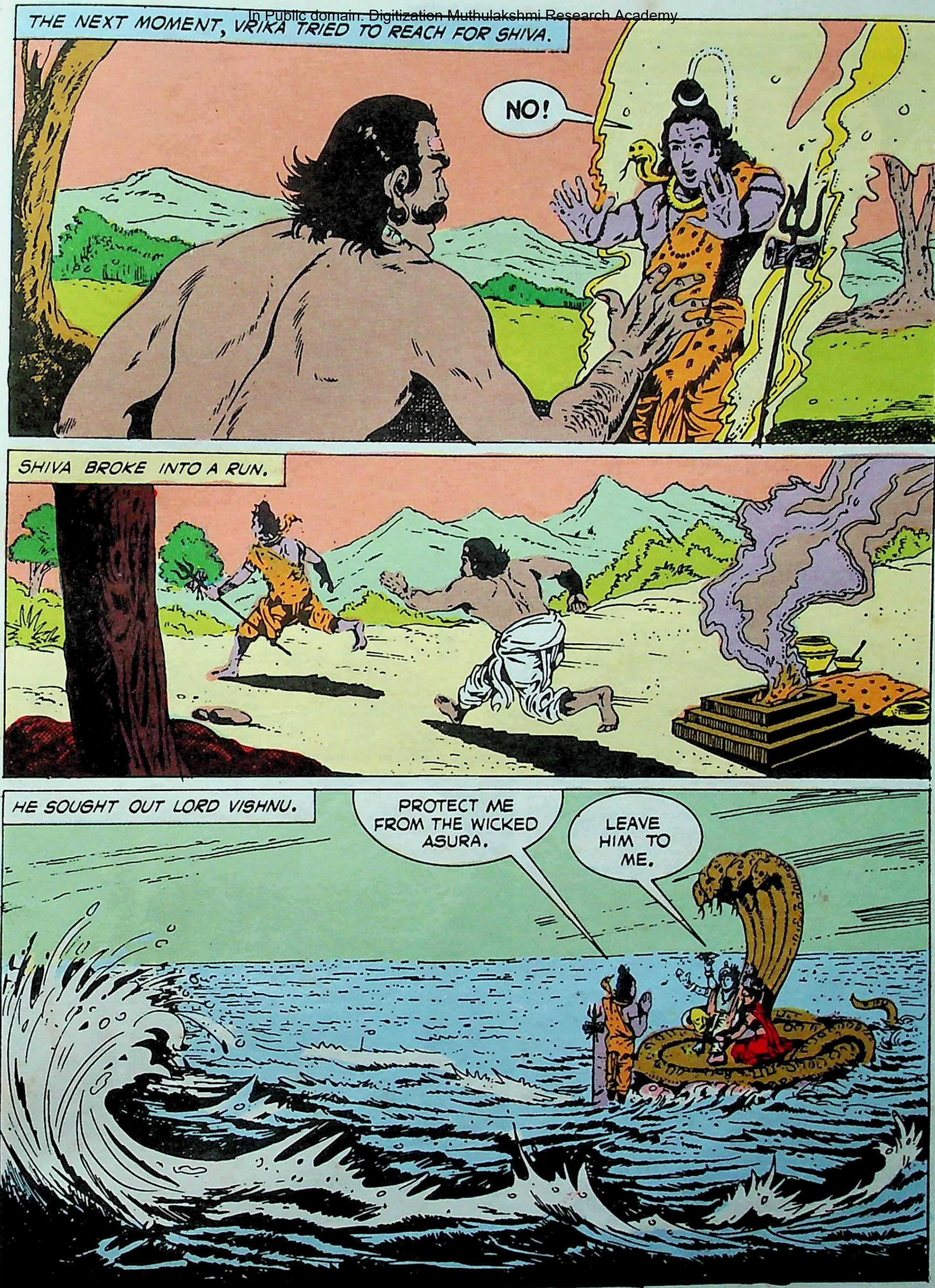

THE DISCUS OF VISHNU WHICH COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED BY EITHER SHIVA OR BRAHMA, RESPECTS YOUR WORDS. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF YOUR POWER?
THE LOVE OF LORD VISHNU.

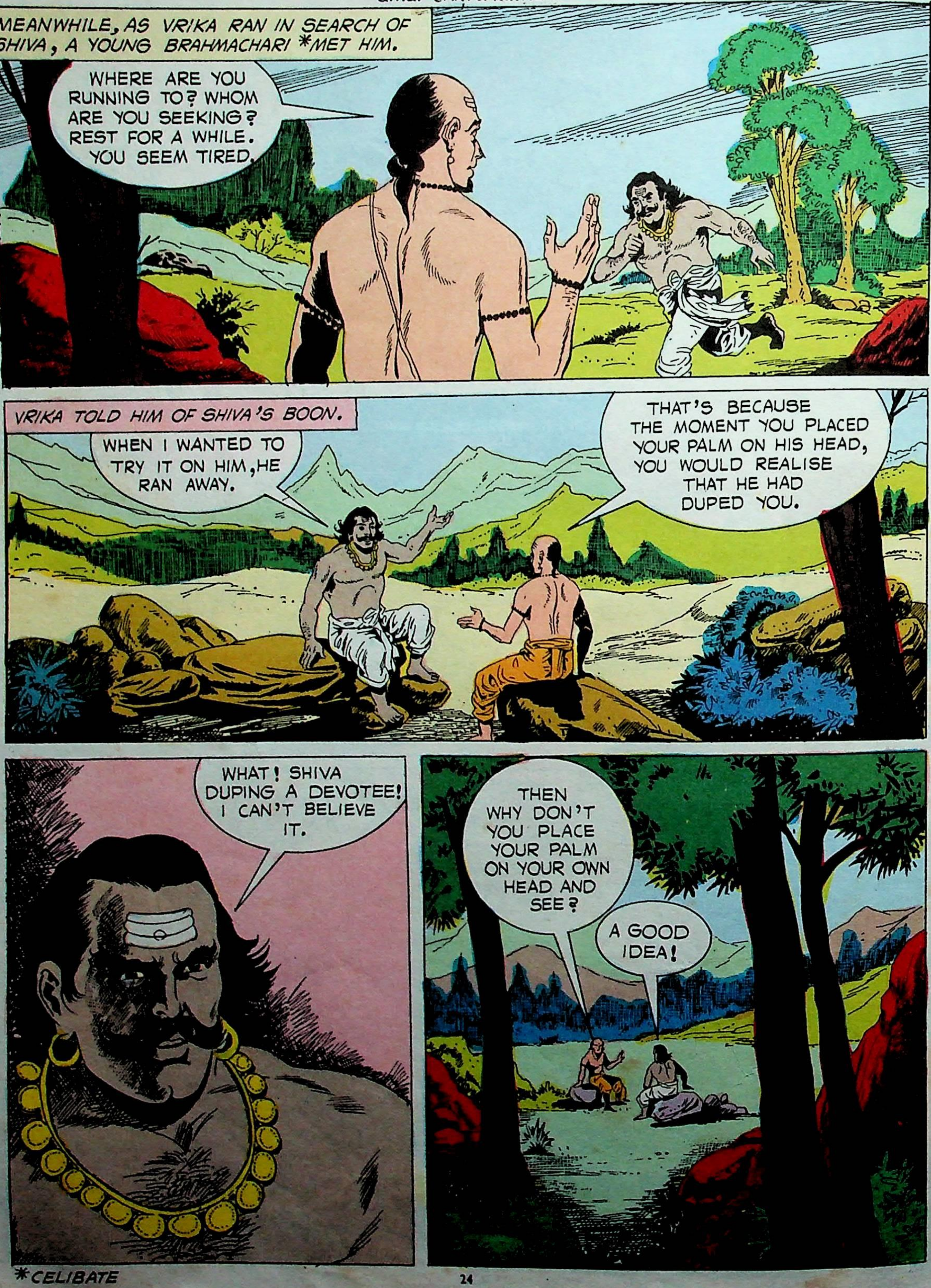
THUS DID VISHNU DEMONSTRATE HIS LOVE FOR HIS DEVOTEES.

VRIKASURA

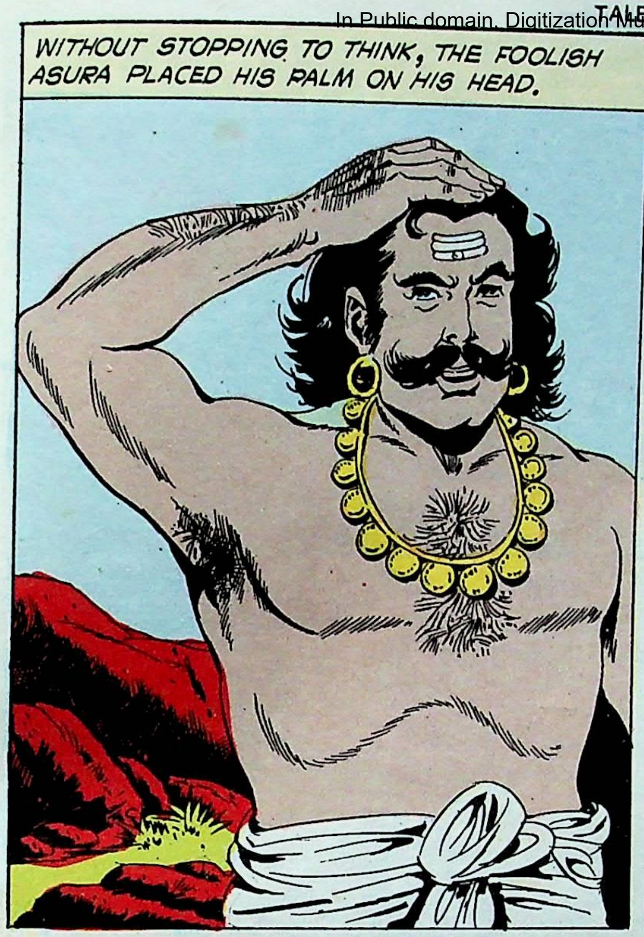

THE FOOLISH BUT MIGHTY ASURA, VRIKA, ONCE DECIDED TO PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA.
HE CUT OFF HIS FLESH AND OFFERED IT TO THE LORD.
LORD, WITH THIS OFFERING, MAY YOU APPEAR BEFORE ME.
HE DOES NOT APPEAR. PERHAPS IT IS ONLY THE OFFERING OF MY HEAD THAT WILL PROPITIATE THE LORD.

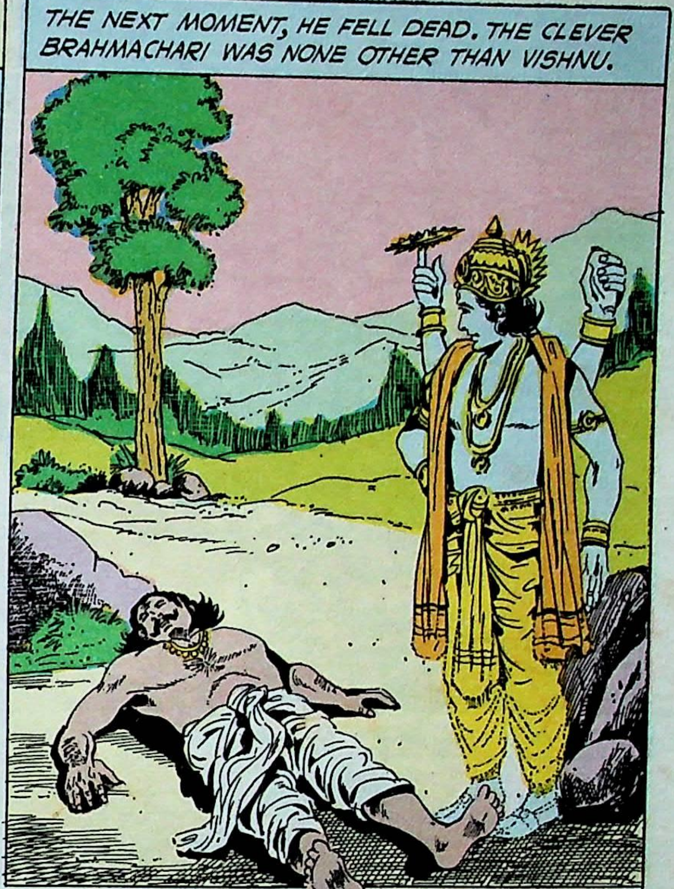

WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO SEVER HIS HEAD FROM THE BODY—
STOP, VRIKA! THERE IS NO NEED TO KILL YOURSELF TO PLEASE ONE WHO IS SATISFIED WITH A MERE OFFERING OF WATER.
WHAT IS THE BOON YOU SEEK?
I WISH TO CONQUER THE WORLD. MAY ANYONE ON WHOSE HEAD I LAY MY PALM, DIE.
SO BE IT.

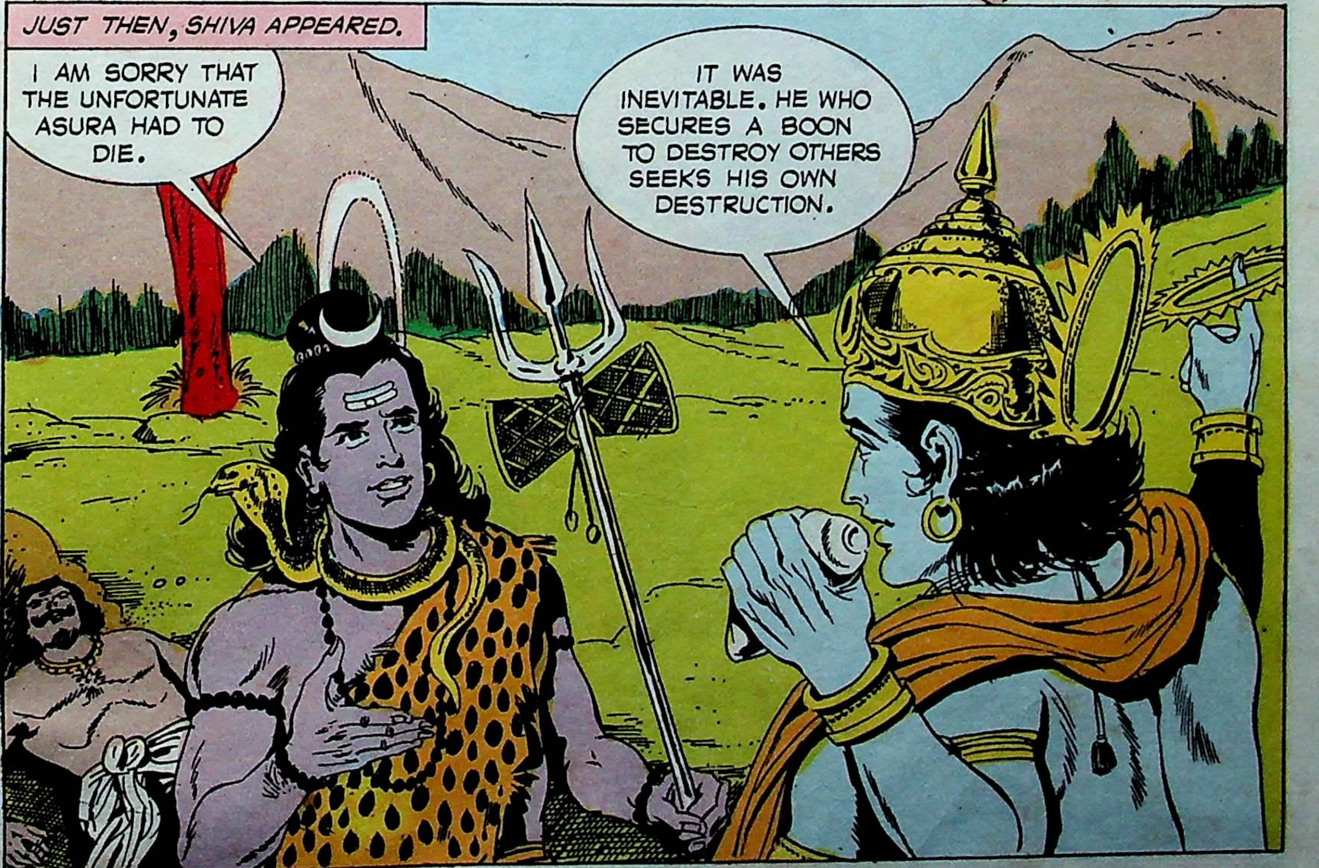

THE NEXT MOMENT, VRIKA TRIED TO REACH FOR SHIVA.
NO!
SHIVA BROKE INTO A RUN.
HE SOUGHT OUT LORD VISHNU.
PROTECT ME FROM THE WICKED ASURA.
LEAVE HIM TO ME.


MEANWHILE, AS VRIKA RAN IN SEARCH OF SHIVA, A YOUNG BRAHMACHARI *MET HIM.
WHERE ARE YOU RUNNING TO? WHOM ARE YOU SEEKING? REST FOR A WHILE. YOU SEEM TIRED.
VRIKA TOLD HIM OF SHIVA'S BOON.
WHEN I WANTED TO TRY IT ON HIM, HE RAN AWAY.
THAT'S BECAUSE THE MOMENT YOU PLACED YOUR PALM ON HIS HEAD, YOU WOULD REALISE THAT HE HAD DUPED YOU.
WHAT! SHIVA DUPING A DEVOTEE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU PLACE YOUR PALM ON YOUR OWN HEAD AND SEE?
A GOOD IDEA!

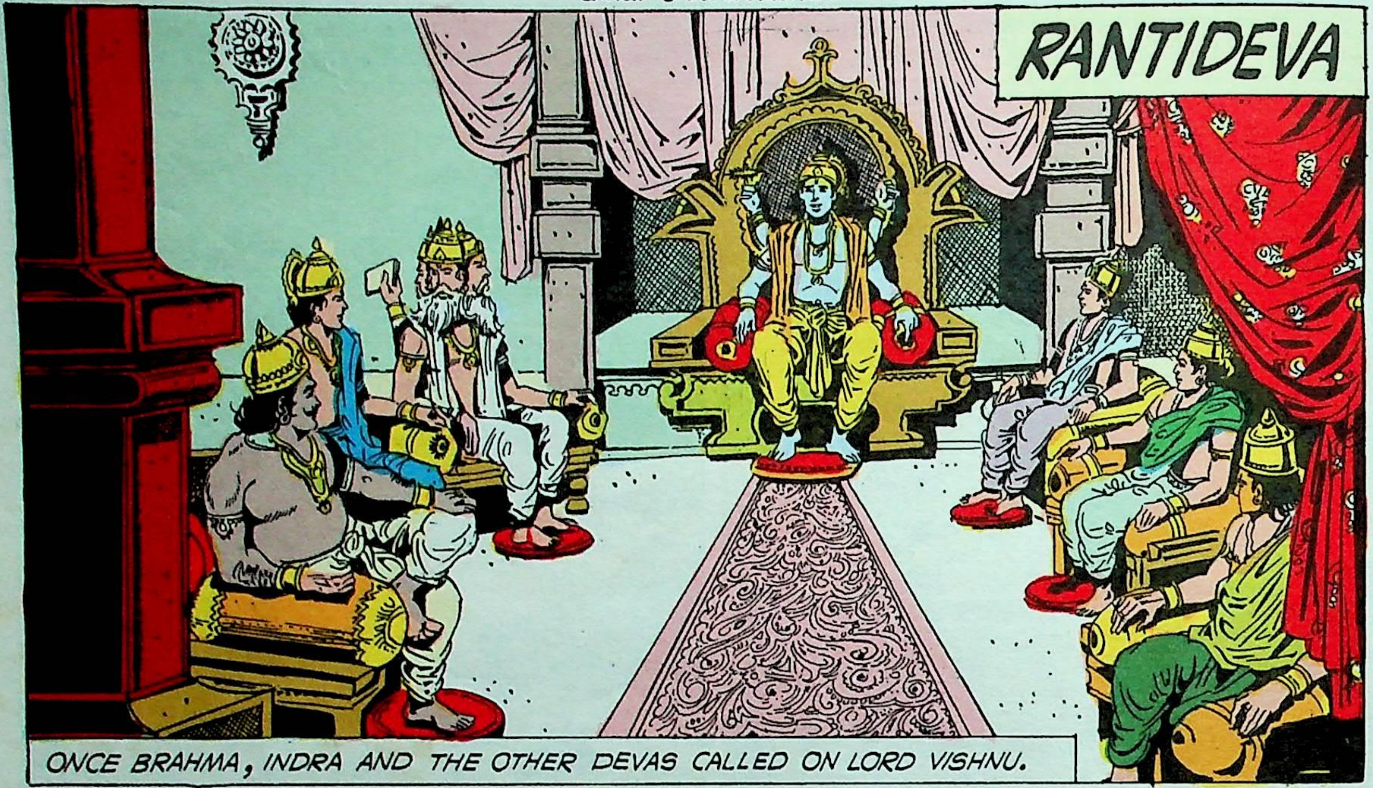
*CELIBATE


WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK, THE FOOLISH ASURA PLACED HIS PALM ON HIS HEAD.

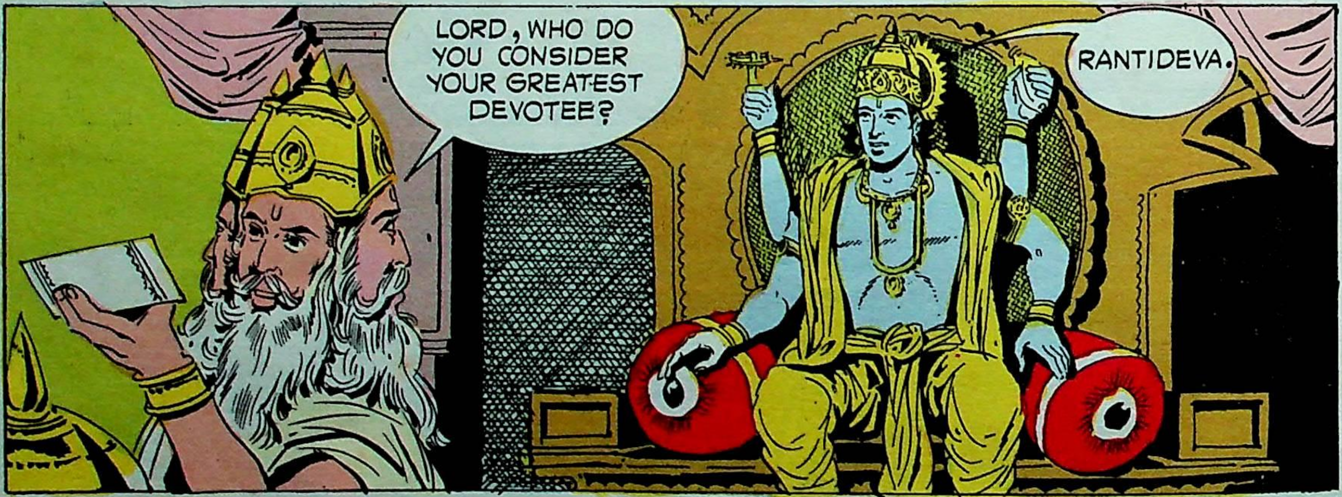

THE NEXT MOMENT, HE FELL DEAD. THE CLEVER BRAHMACHARI WAS NONE OTHER THAN VISHNU.

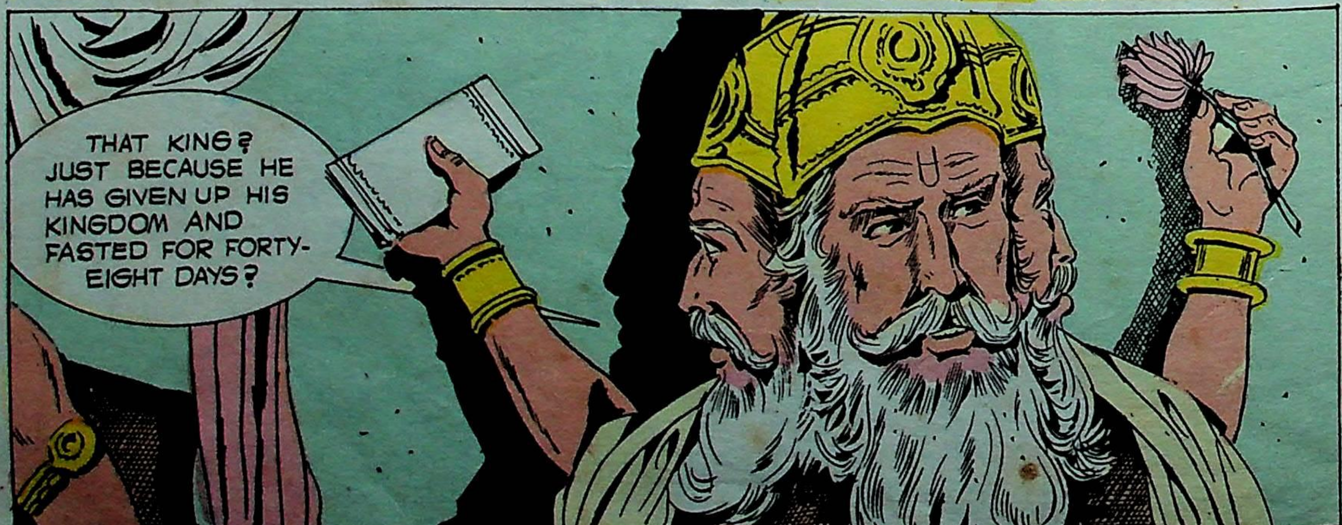

JUST THEN, SHIVA APPEARED.
I AM SORRY THAT THE UNFORTUNATE ASURA HAD TO DIE.
IT WAS INEVITABLE. HE WHO SECURES A BOON TO DESTROY OTHERS SEEKS HIS OWN DESTRUCTION.

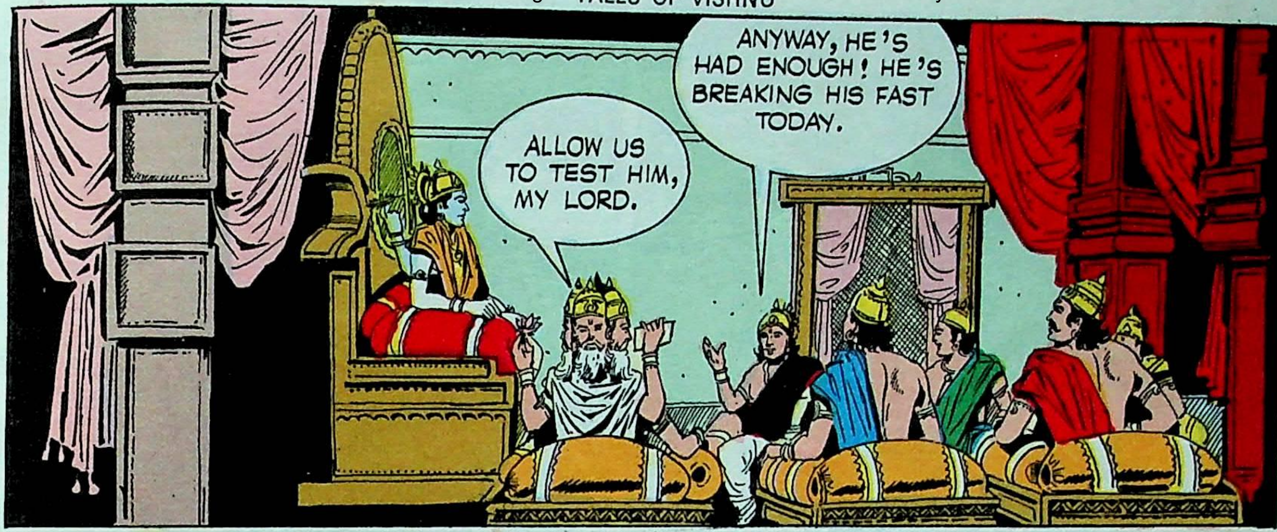
RANTIDEVA

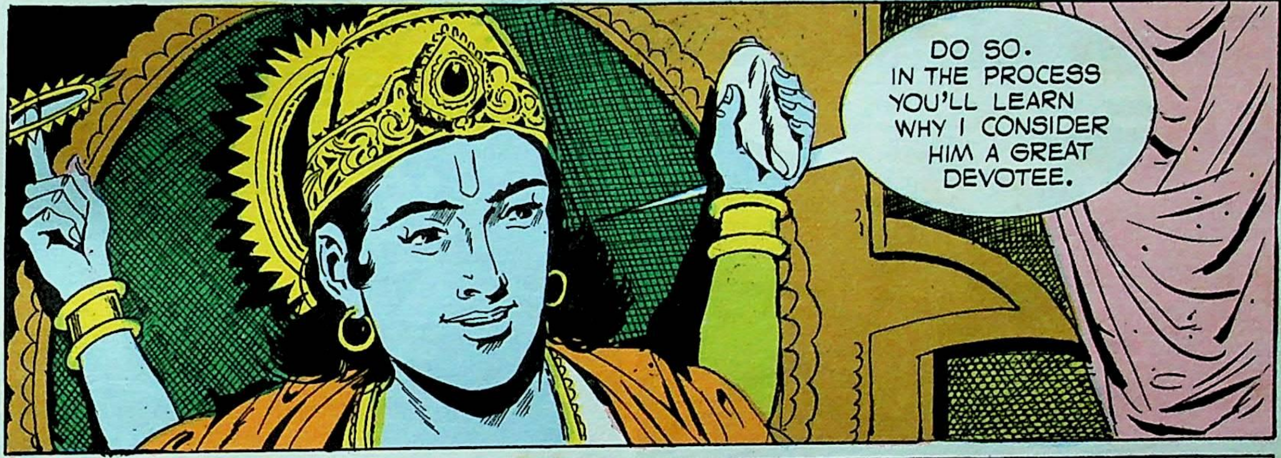


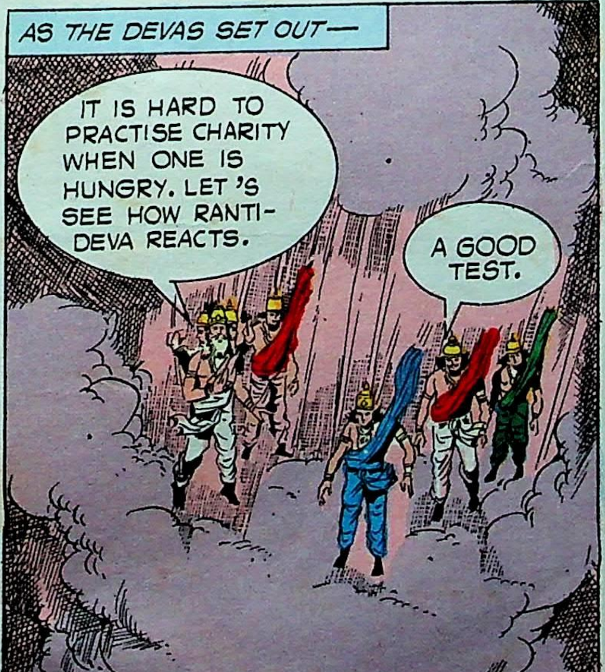
ONCE BRAHMA, INDRA AND THE OTHER DEVAS CALLED ON LORD VISHNU.

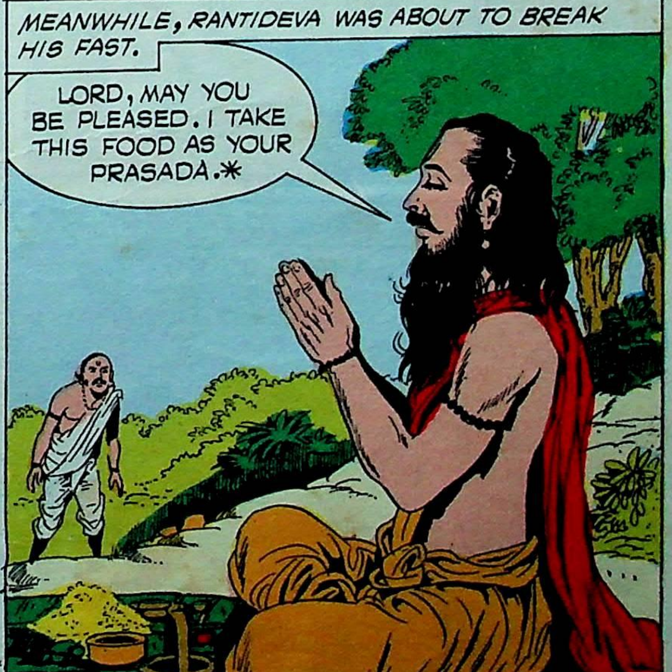

LORD, WHO DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST DEVOTEE?
RANTIDEVA.


THAT KING? JUST BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN UP HIS KINGDOM AND FASTED FOR FORTY-EIGHT DAYS?


ALLOW US TO TEST HIM, MY LORD.
ANYWAY, HE'S HAD ENOUGH! HE'S BREAKING HIS FAST TODAY.

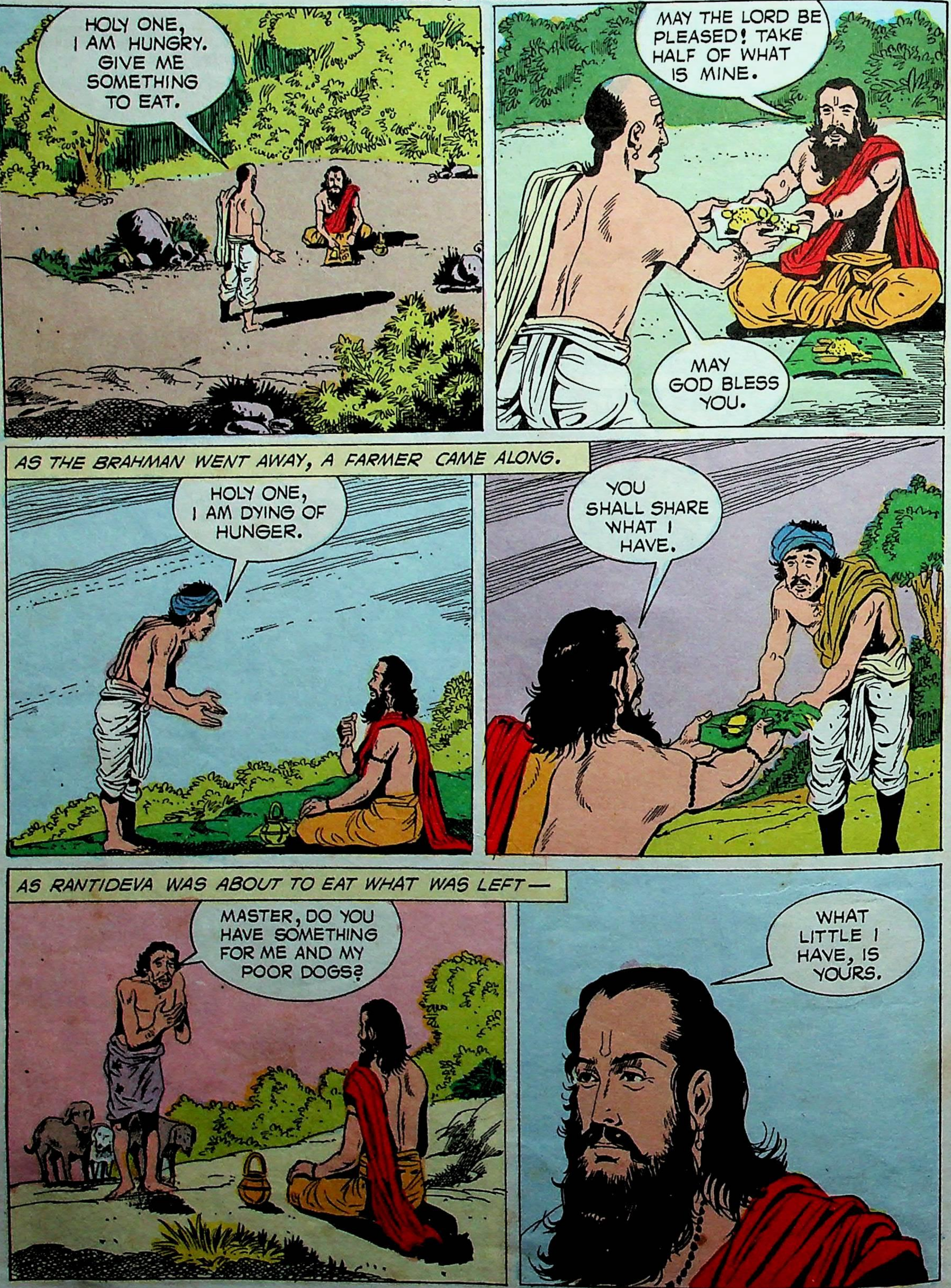

DO SO. IN THE PROCESS YOU'LL LEARN WHY I CONSIDER HIM A GREAT DEVOTEE.


AS THE DEVAS SET OUT—
IT IS HARD TO PRACTISE CHARITY WHEN ONE IS HUNGRY. LET'S SEE HOW RANTIDEVA REACTS.
A GOOD TEST.


MEANWHILE, RANTIDEVA WAS ABOUT TO BREAK HIS FAST.
LORD, MAY YOU BE PLEASED. I TAKE THIS FOOD AS YOUR PRASADA.*

---

* GOD'S GIFT


HOLY ONE, I AM HUNGRY. GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT.
MAY THE LORD BE PLEASED! TAKE HALF OF WHAT IS MINE.
MAY GOD BLESS YOU.
AS THE BRAHMAN WENT AWAY, A FARMER CAME ALONG.
HOLY ONE, I AM DYING OF HUNGER.
YOU SHALL SHARE WHAT I HAVE.
AS RANTIDEVA WAS ABOUT TO EAT WHAT WAS LEFT—
MASTER, DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING FOR ME AND MY POOR DOGS?
WHAT LITTLE I HAVE, IS YOURS.

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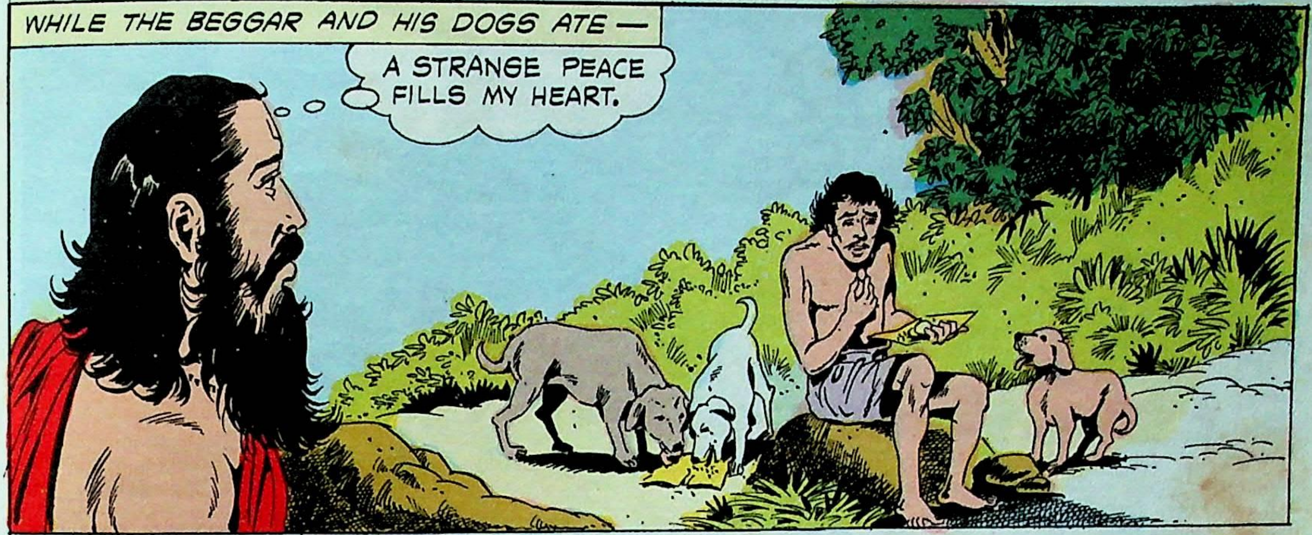
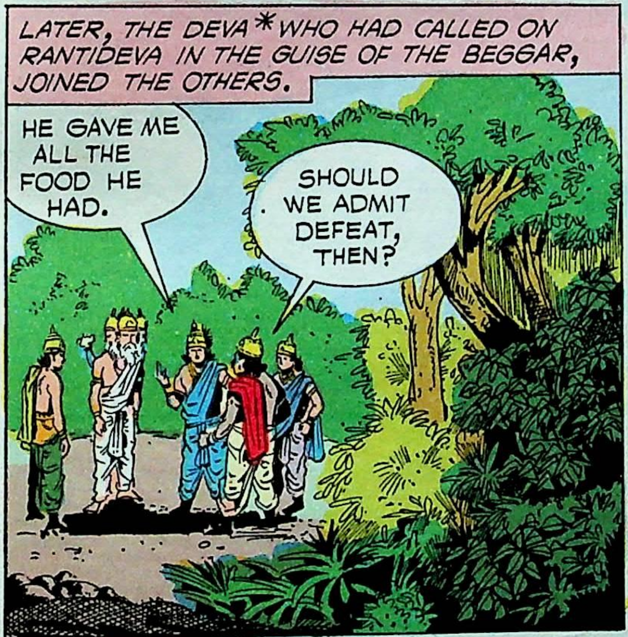
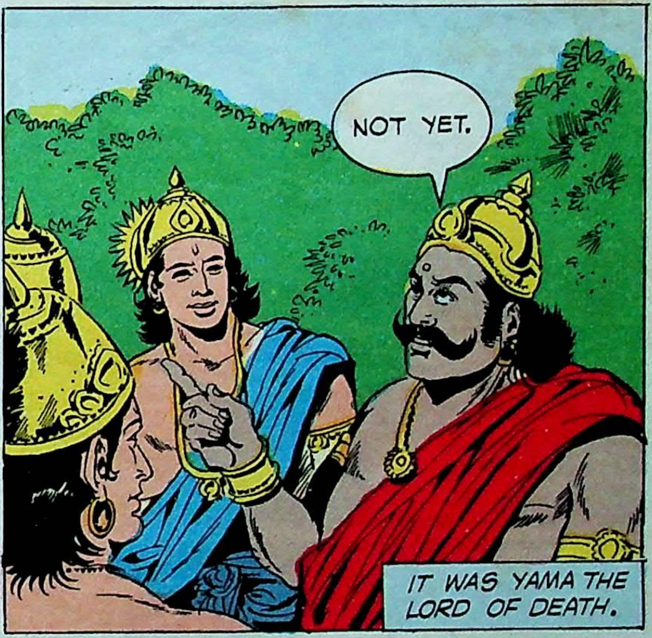
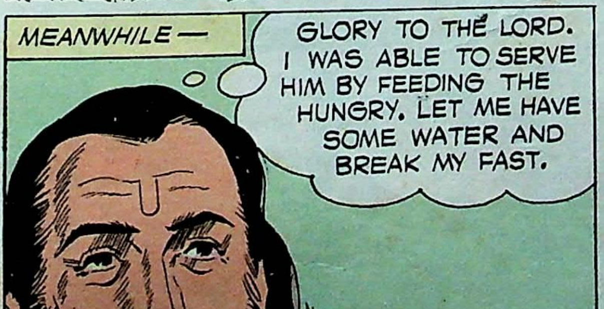
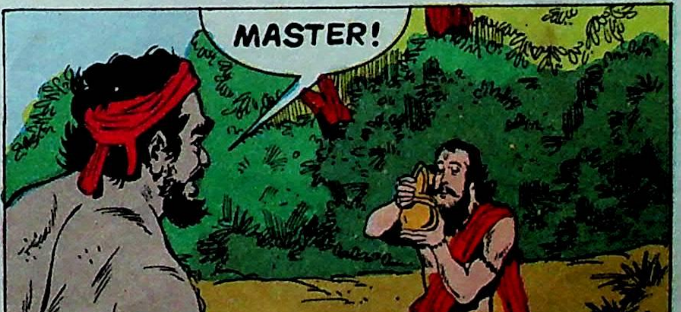

WHILE THE BEGGAR AND HIS DOGS ATE —
A STRANGE PEACE FILLS MY HEART.

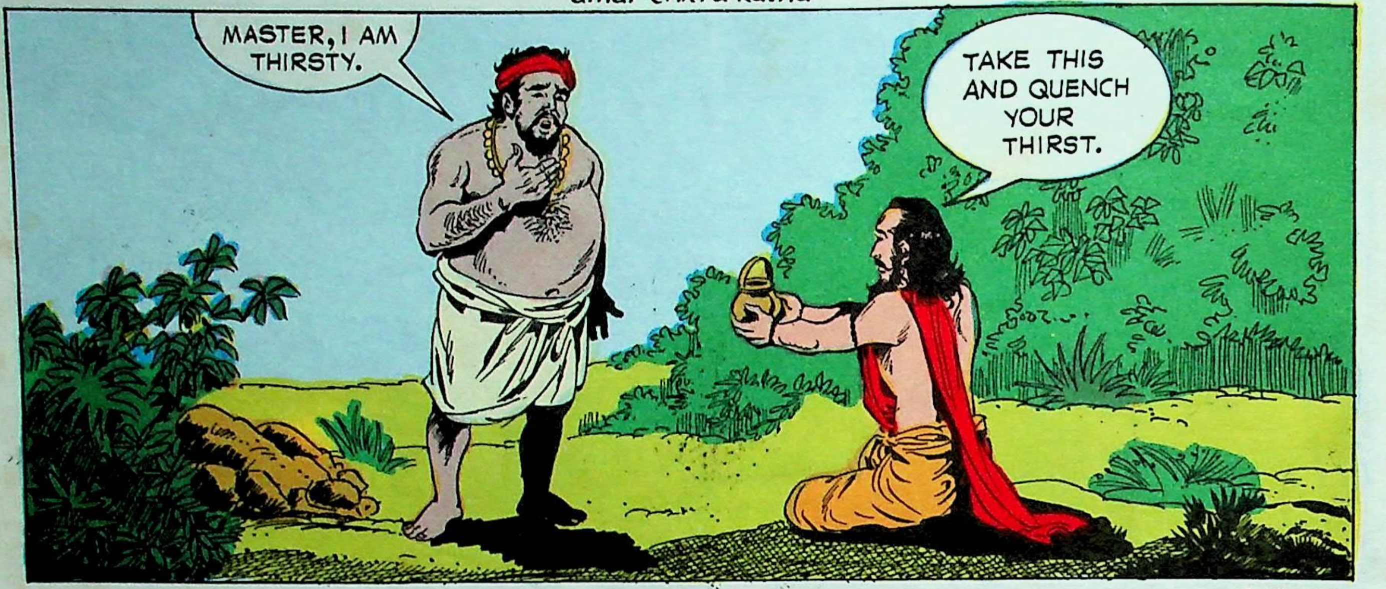

LATER, THE DEVA* WHO HAD CALLED ON RANTIDEVA IN THE GUISE OF THE BEGGAR, JOINED THE OTHERS.
HE GAVE ME ALL THE FOOD HE HAD.
SHOULD WE ADMIT DEFEAT, THEN?

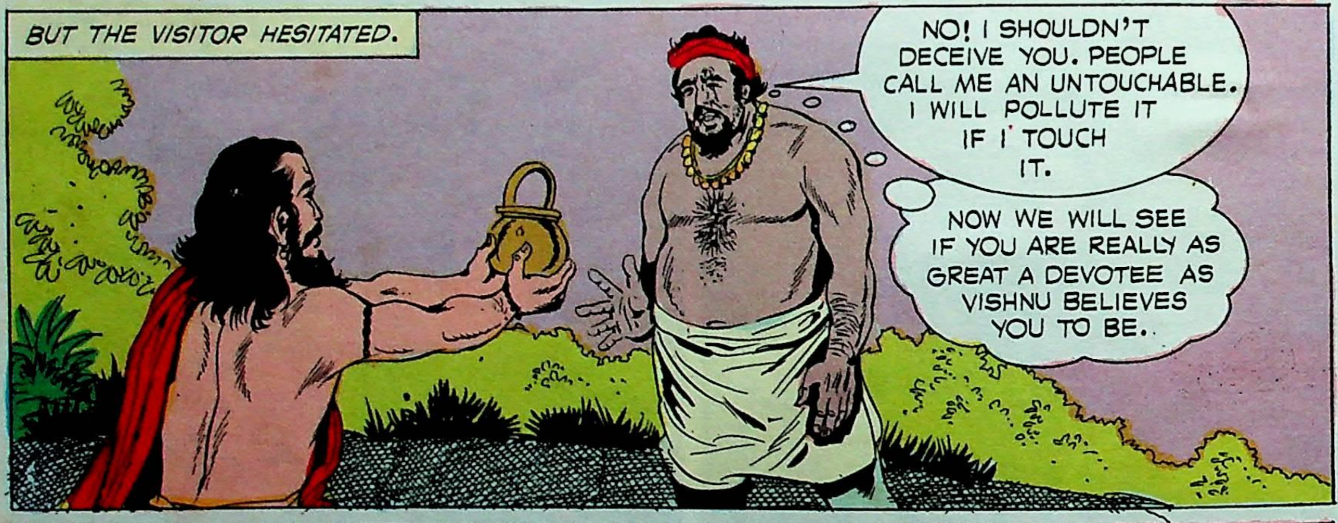

NOT YET.
IT WAS YAMA THE LORD OF DEATH.

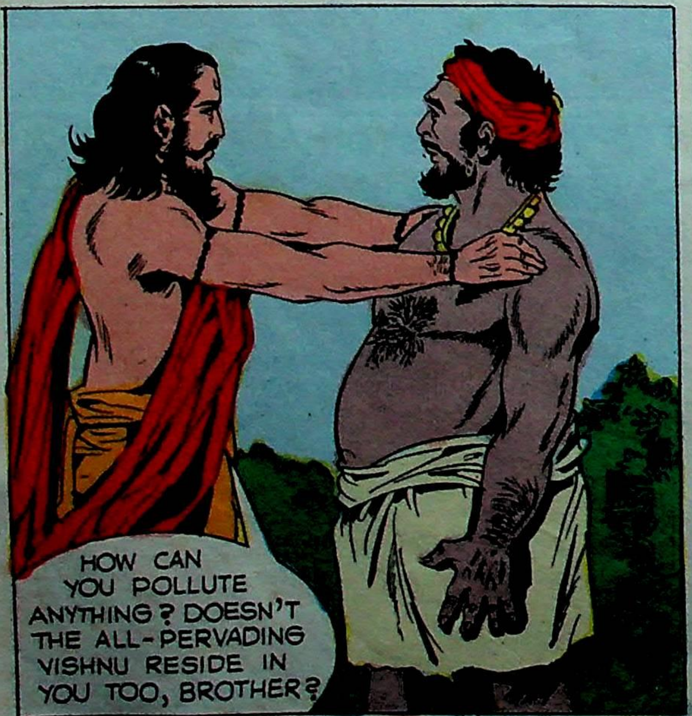

MEANWHILE —
GLORY TO THE LORD. I WAS ABLE TO SERVE HIM BY FEEDING THE HUNGRY. LET ME HAVE SOME WATER AND BREAK MY FAST.

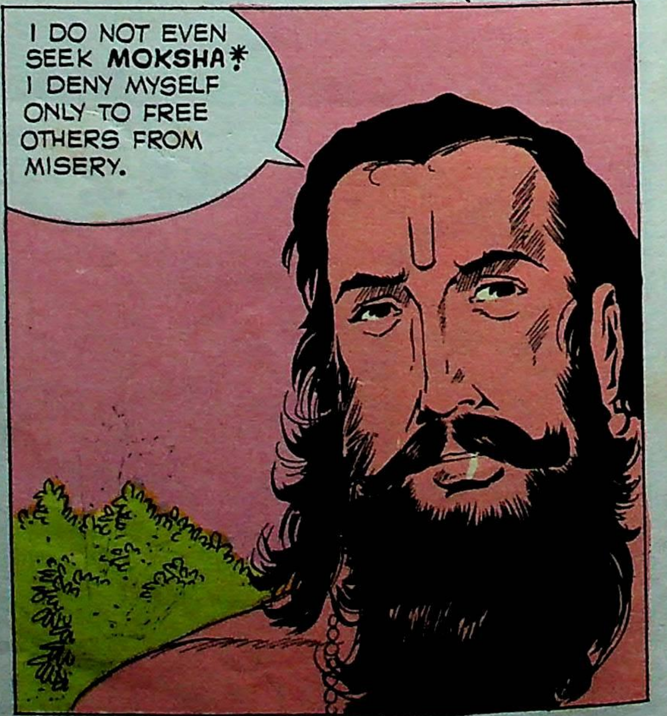


CELESTIAL BEING


MASTER, I AM THIRSTY.
TAKE THIS AND QUENCH YOUR THIRST.

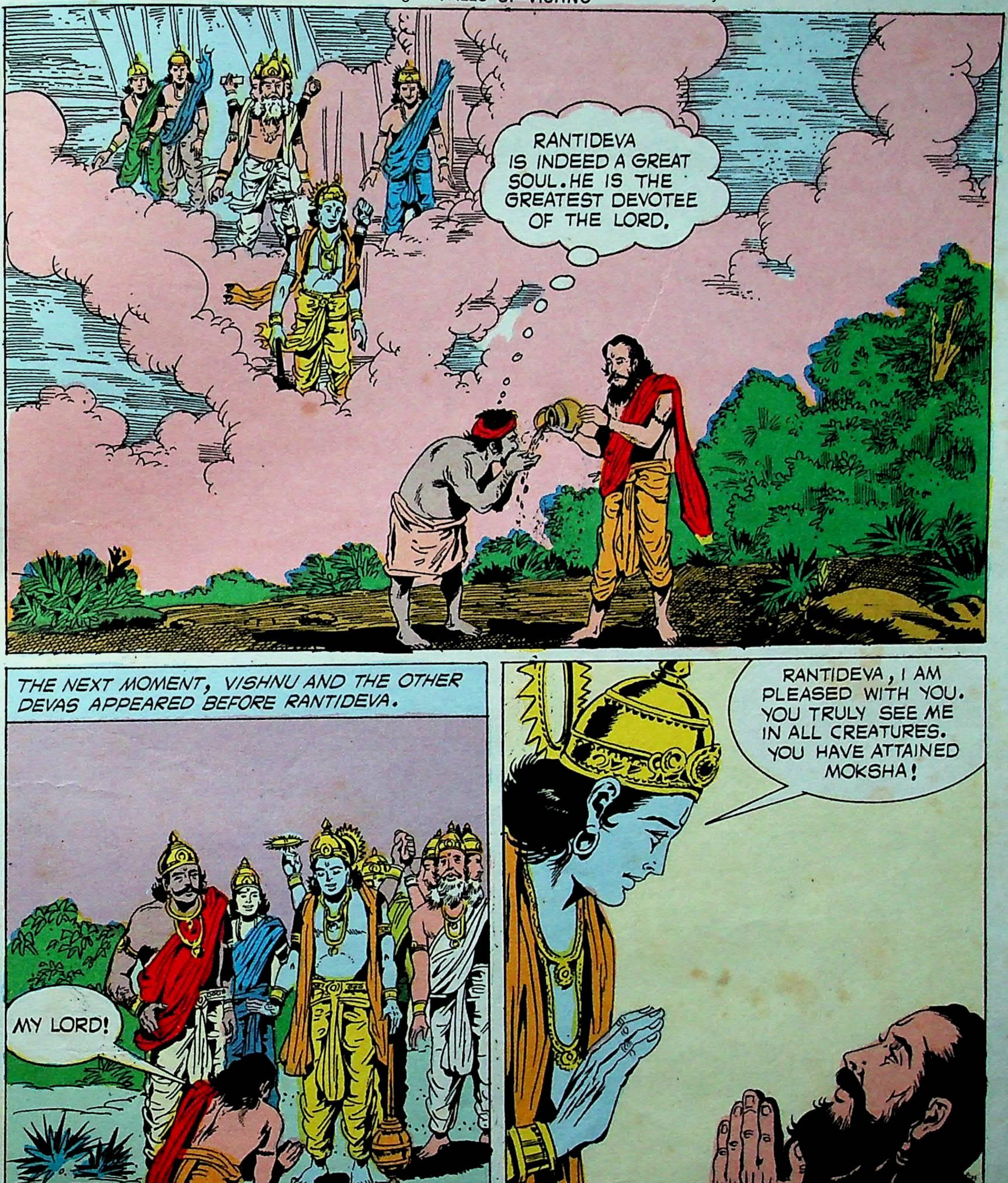

BUT THE VISITOR HESITATED.
NO! I SHOULDN'T DECEIVE YOU. PEOPLE CALL ME AN UNTOUCHABLE. I WILL POLLUTE IT IF I TOUCH IT.
NOW WE WILL SEE IF YOU ARE REALLY AS GREAT A DEVOTEE AS VISHNU BELIEVES YOU TO BE.


HOW CAN YOU POLLUTE ANYTHING? DOESN'T THE ALL-PERVADING VISHNU RESIDE IN YOU TOO, BROTHER?

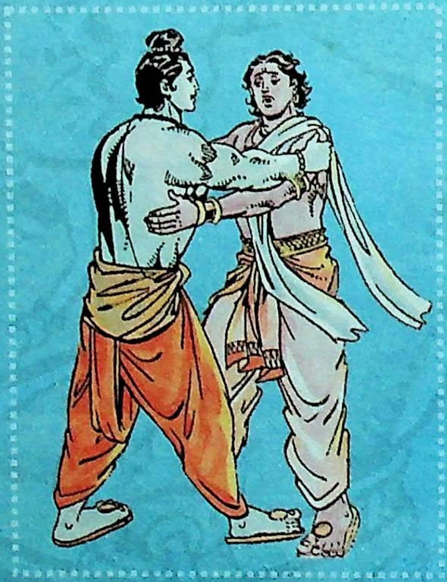

I DO NOT EVEN SEEK **MOKSHA*** I DENY MYSELF ONLY TO FREE OTHERS FROM MISERY.

---

* *EMANCIPATION OF THE SOUL*


RANTIDEVA IS INDEED A GREAT SOUL. HE IS THE GREATEST DEVOTEE OF THE LORD.
THE NEXT MOMENT, VISHNU AND THE OTHER DEVAS APPEARED BEFORE RANTIDEVA.
MY LORD!
RANTIDEVA, I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. YOU TRULY SEE ME IN ALL CREATURES. YOU HAVE ATTAINED MOKSHA!

"A Queen was kidnapped."



The King and his army went to her rescue.

If the **Ramayana** could be as simple as that,
it wouldn't have been an epic.

SPECIAL ISSUE
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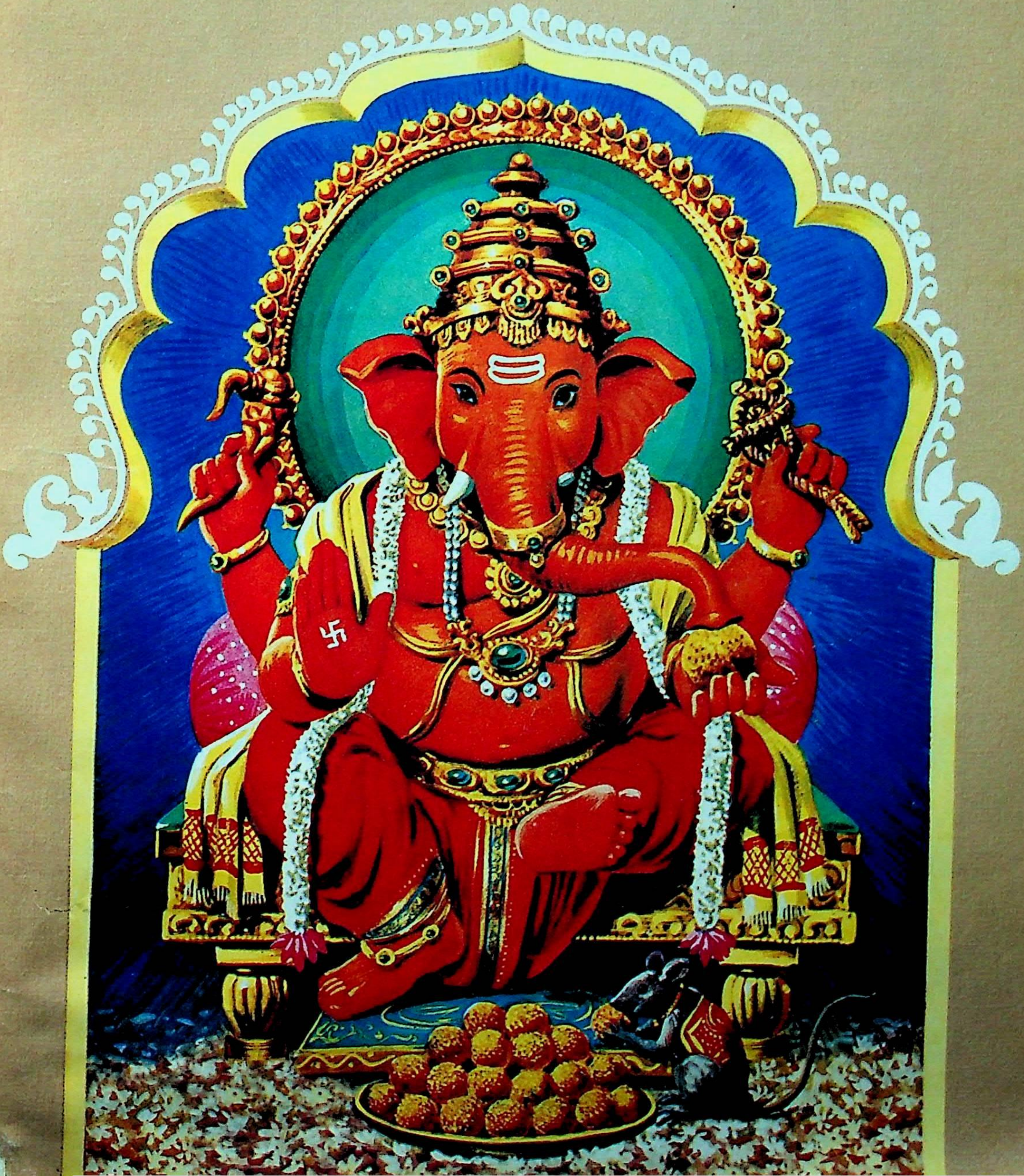


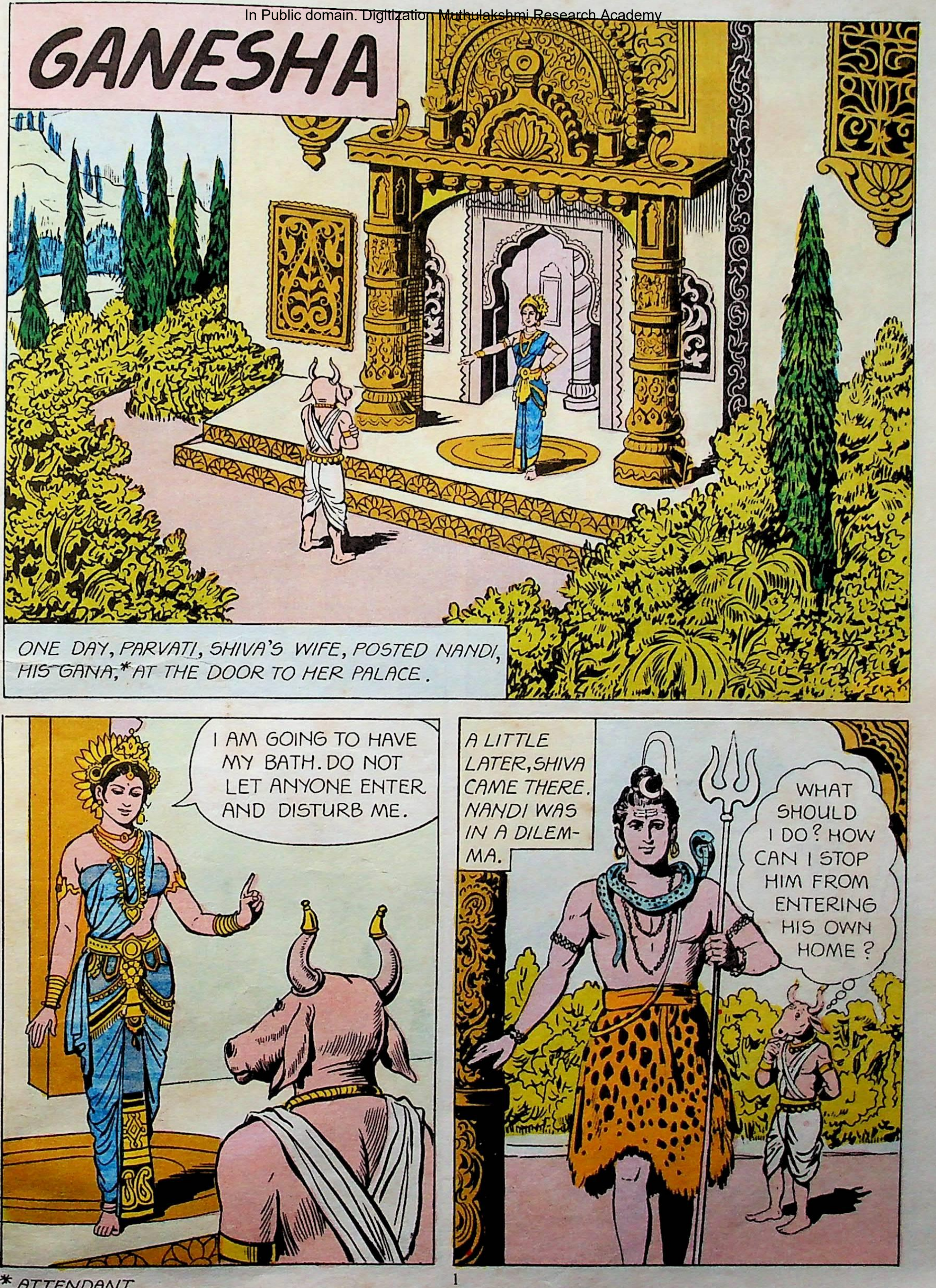
The route to your roots

GANESHA

Ganesha revered in India as the remover of obstacles is first and foremost an obedient son. Standing guard at his mother's door, this son of Parvati refuses to let anyone through. Even Lord Shiva is denied entry! This confrontation between father and son has one beneficial outcome – the emergence of Ganesha, the elephant- headed god of wisdom.

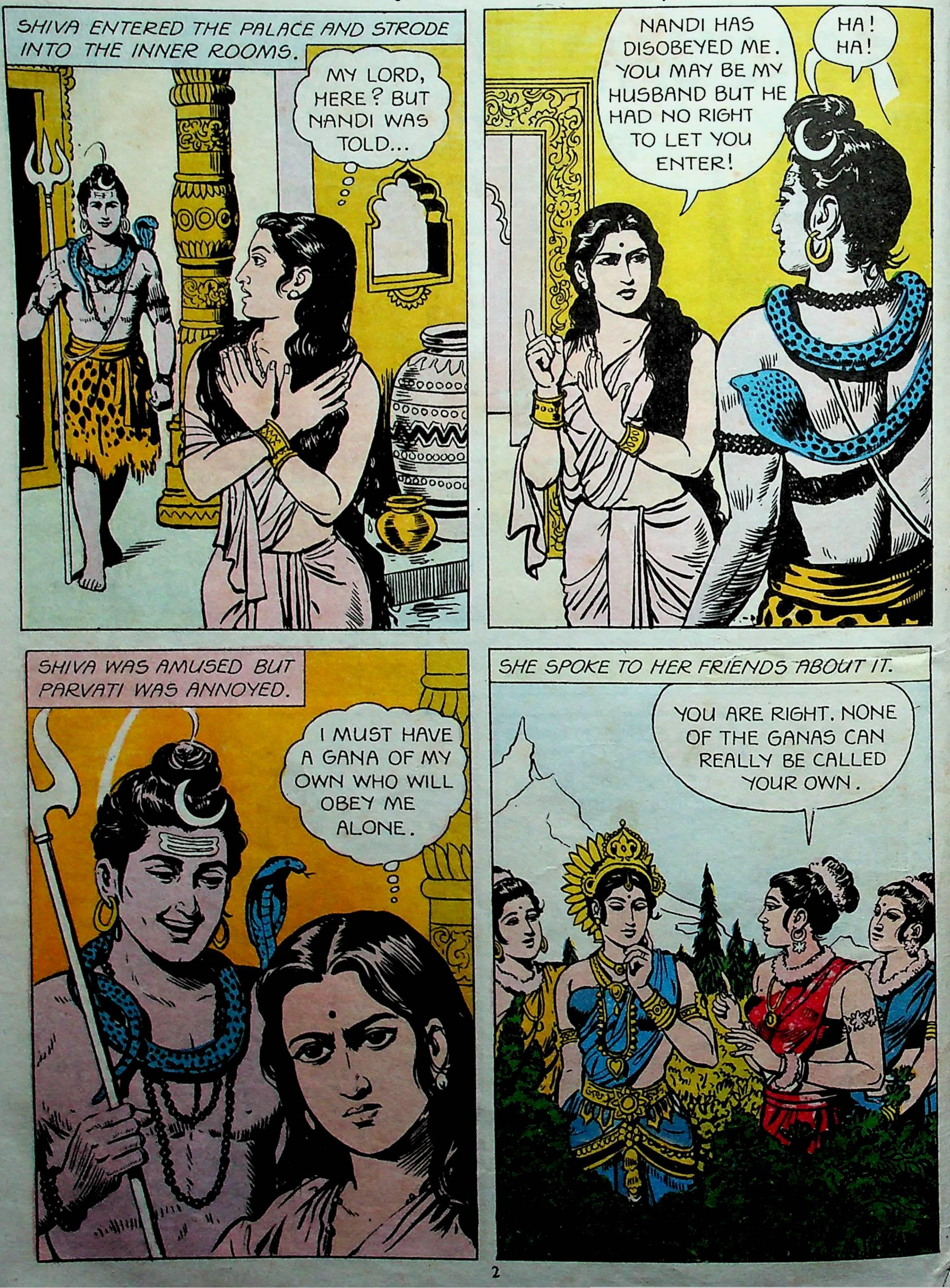
Script	**Illustrations**	**Editor**
Kamala Chandrakant	C.M.Vitankar	Anant Pai

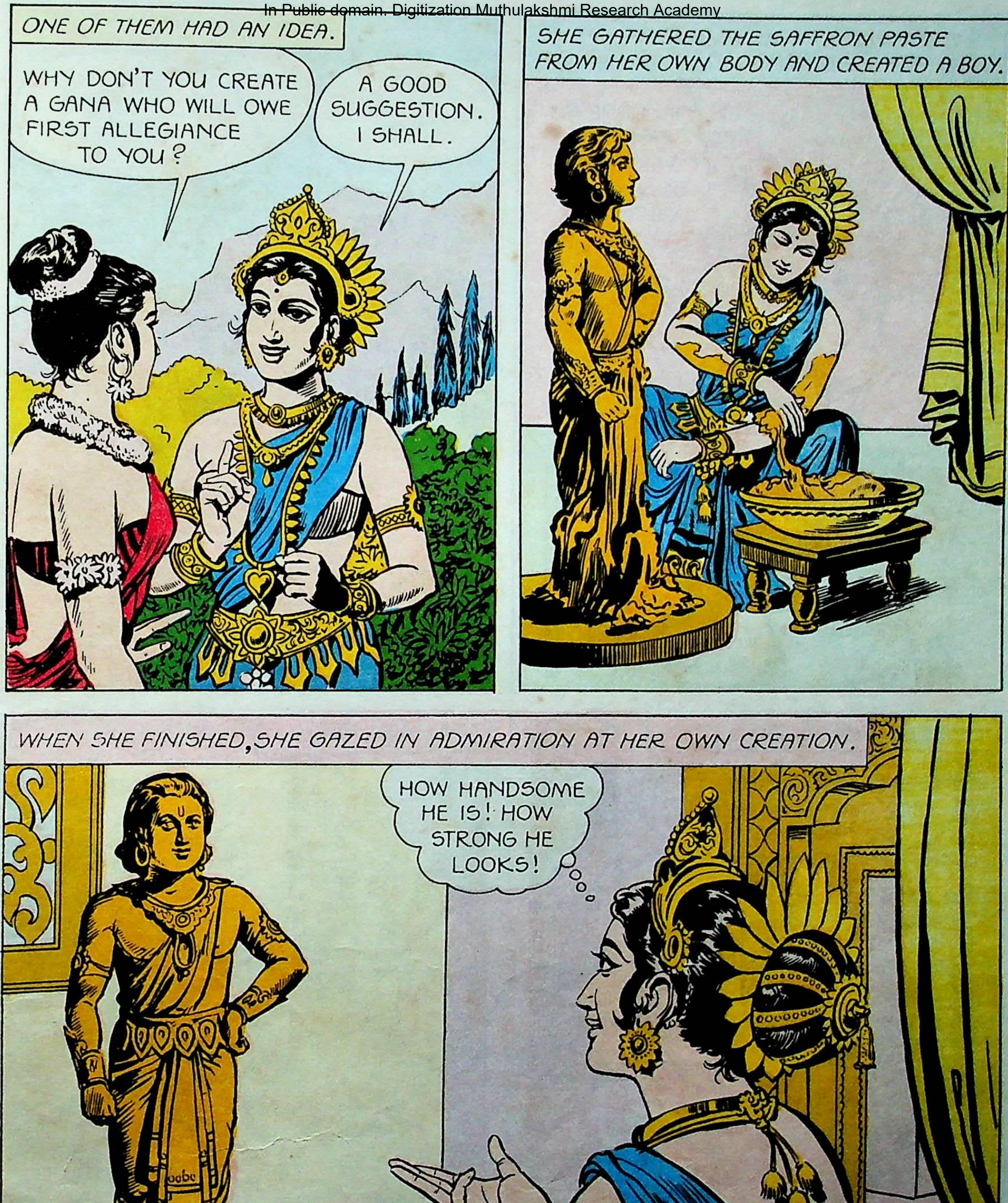
GANESHA


ONE DAY, PARVATI, SHIVA'S WIFE, POSTED NANDI, HIS GANA,* AT THE DOOR TO HER PALACE.
I AM GOING TO HAVE MY BATH. DO NOT LET ANYONE ENTER AND DISTURB ME.
A LITTLE LATER, SHIVA CAME THERE. NANDI WAS IN A DILEMMA.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? HOW CAN I STOP HIM FROM ENTERING HIS OWN HOME?

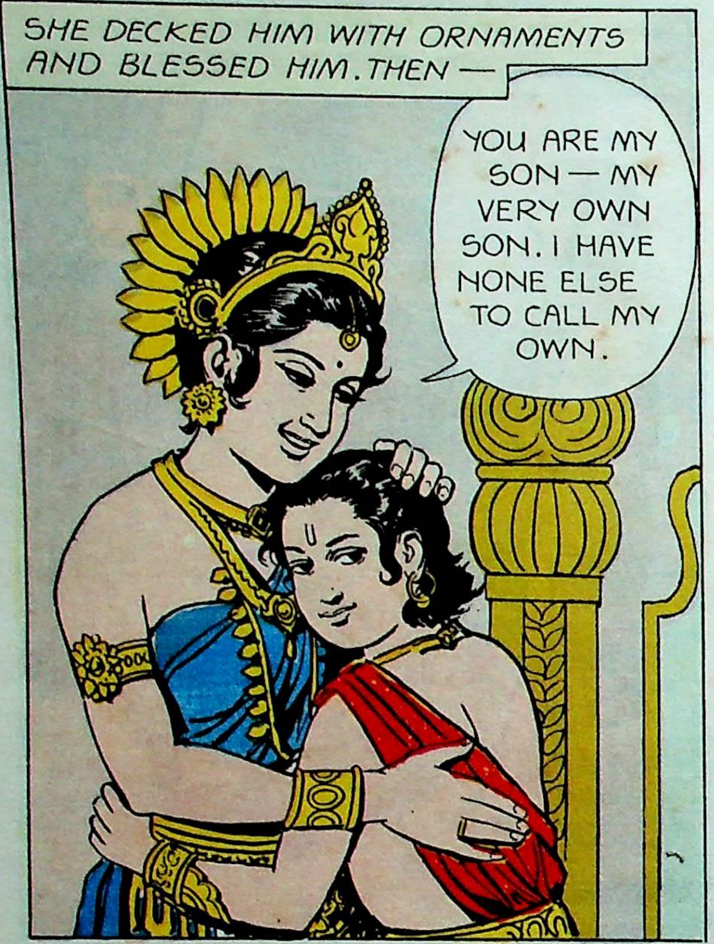
---

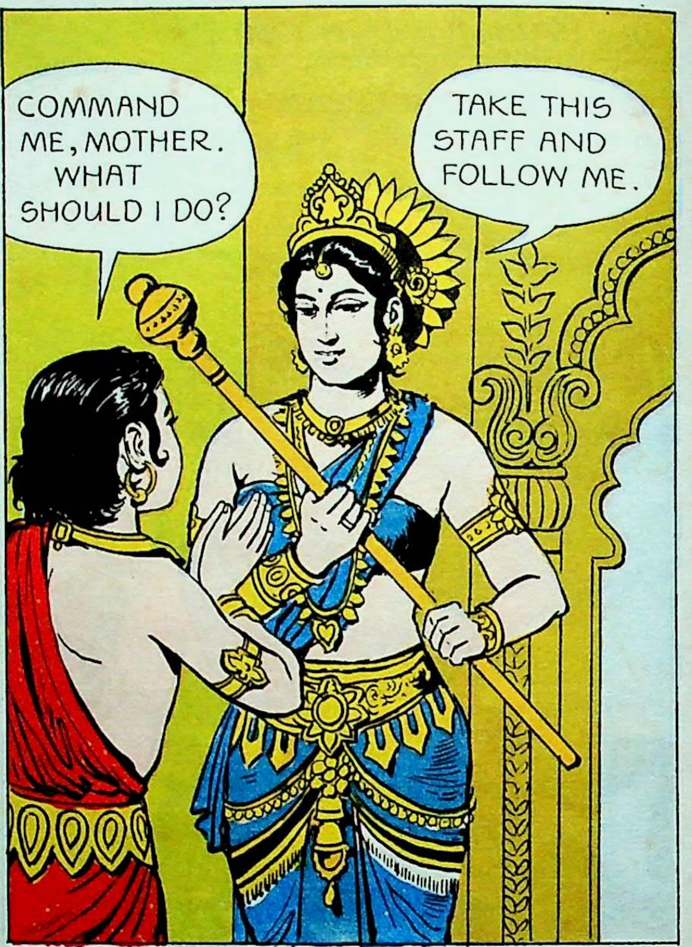
* ATTENDANT.


SHIVA ENTERED THE PALACE AND STRODE INTO THE INNER ROOMS.
MY LORD, HERE? BUT NANDI WAS TOLD...
NANDI HAS DISOBEYED ME. YOU MAY BE MY HUSBAND BUT HE HAD NO RIGHT TO LET YOU ENTER!
HA! HA!
SHIVA WAS AMUSED BUT PARVATI WAS ANNOYED.
I MUST HAVE A GANA OF MY OWN WHO WILL OBEY ME ALONE.
SHE SPOKE TO HER FRIENDS ABOUT IT.
YOU ARE RIGHT. NONE OF THE GANAS CAN REALLY BE CALLED YOUR OWN.

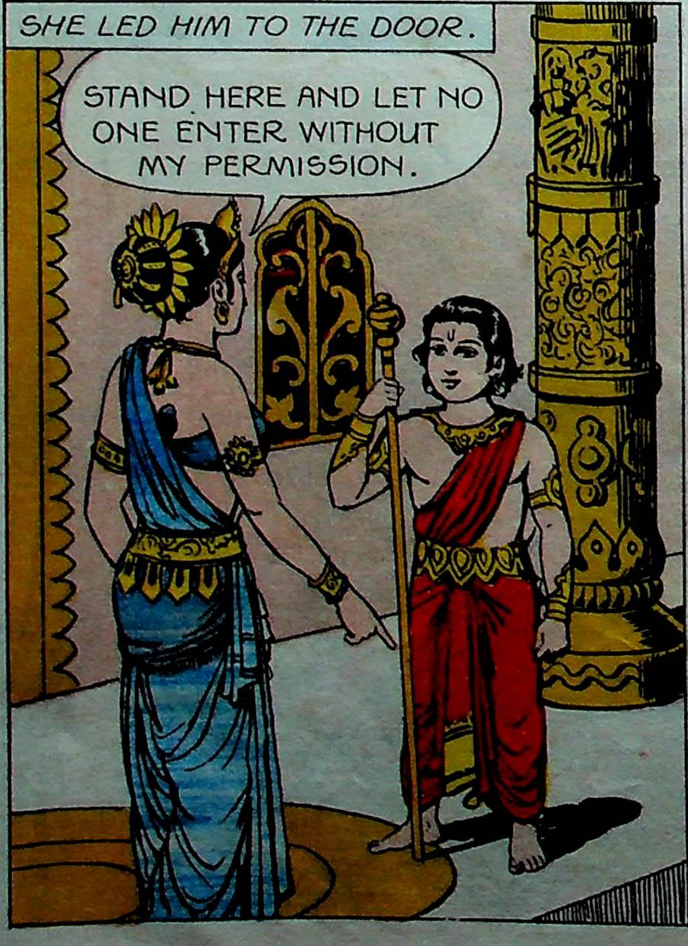

ONE OF THEM HAD AN IDEA.
WHY DON'T YOU CREATE A GANA WHO WILL OWE FIRST ALLEGIANCE TO YOU?
A GOOD SUGGESTION. I SHALL.
SHE GATHERED THE SAFFRON PASTE FROM HER OWN BODY AND CREATED A BOY.
WHEN SHE FINISHED, SHE GAZED IN ADMIRATION AT HER OWN CREATION.
HOW HANDSOME HE IS! HOW STRONG HE LOOKS!

SHE DECKED HIM WITH ORNAMENTS AND BLESSED HIM. THEN —

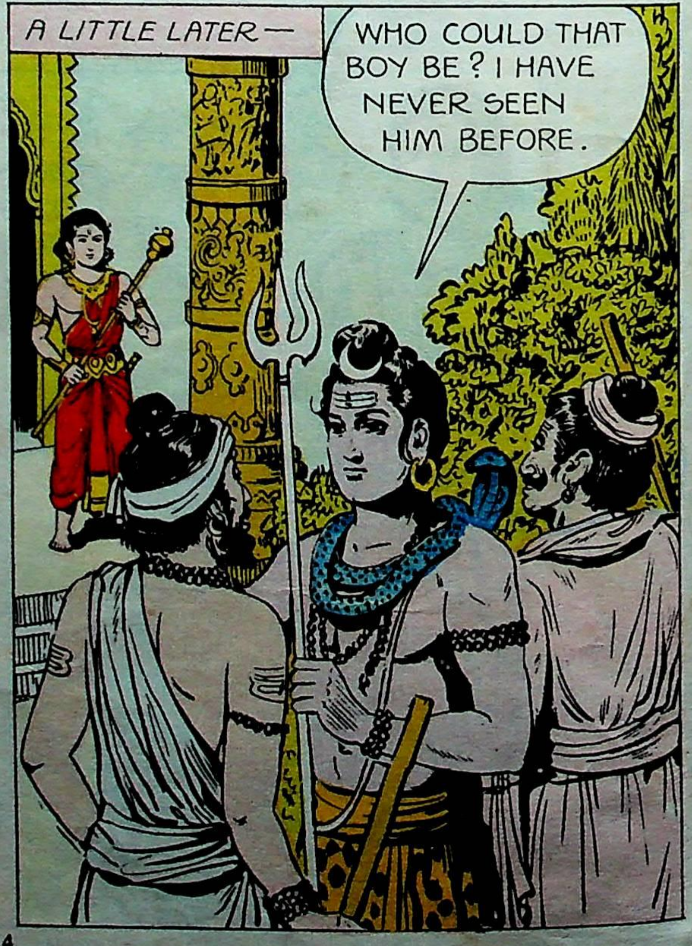

YOU ARE MY SON — MY VERY OWN SON. I HAVE NONE ELSE TO CALL MY OWN.

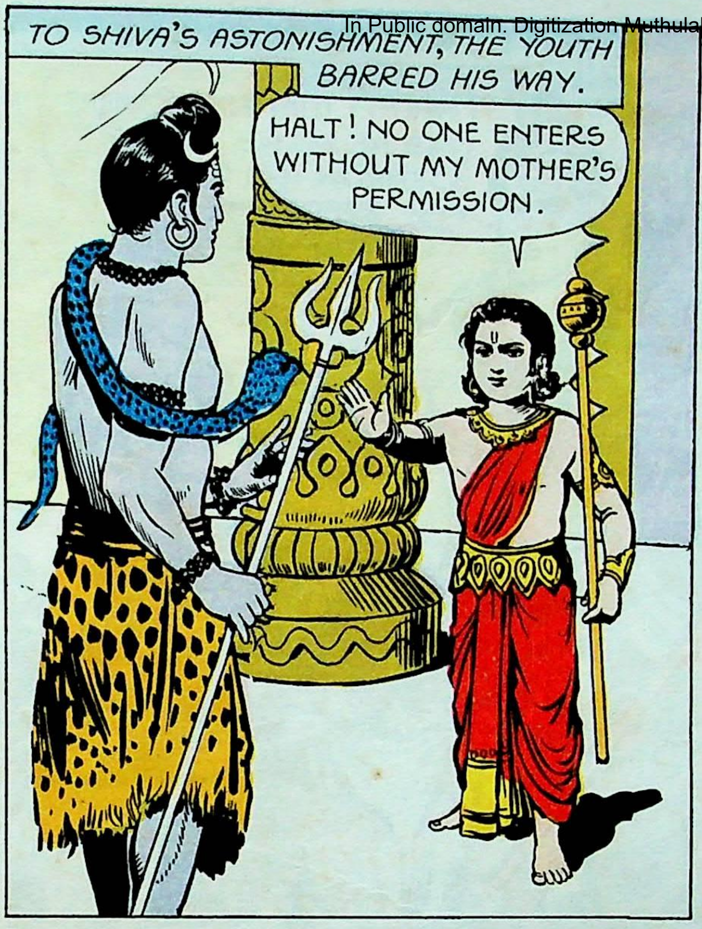

COMMAND ME, MOTHER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
TAKE THIS STAFF AND FOLLOW ME.

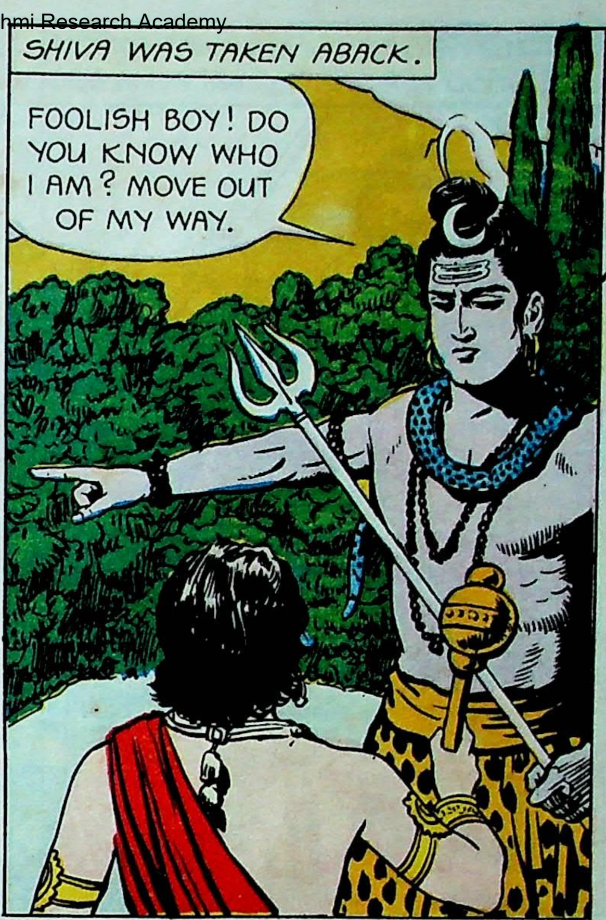
SHE LED HIM TO THE DOOR.

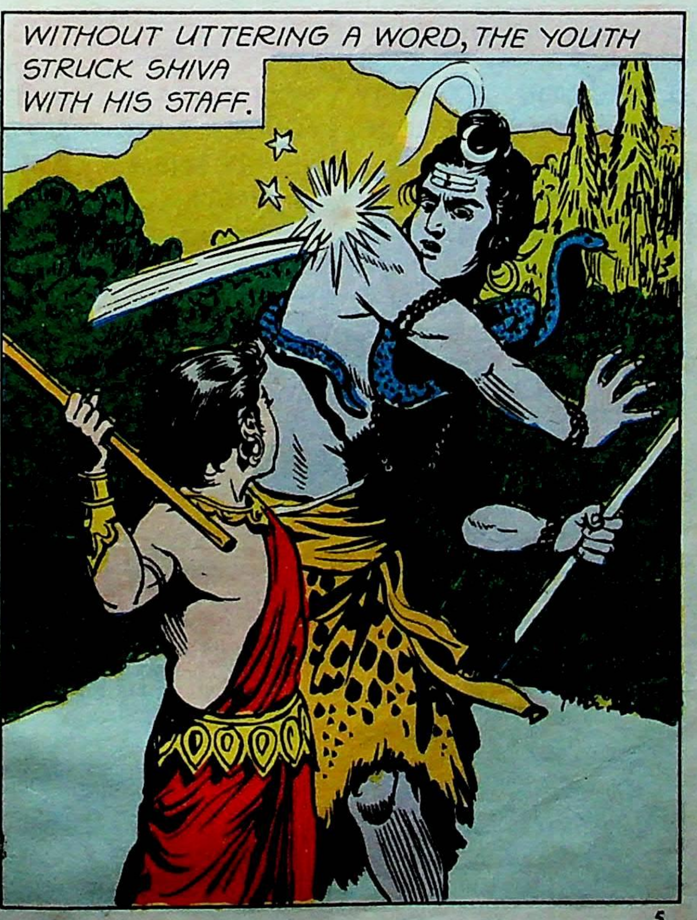

STAND HERE AND LET NO ONE ENTER WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.

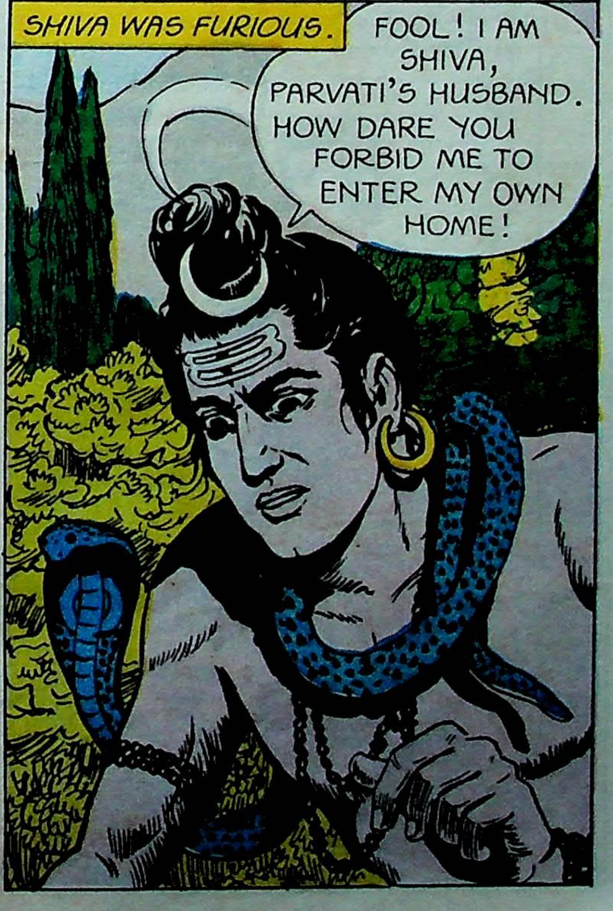
A LITTLE LATER —

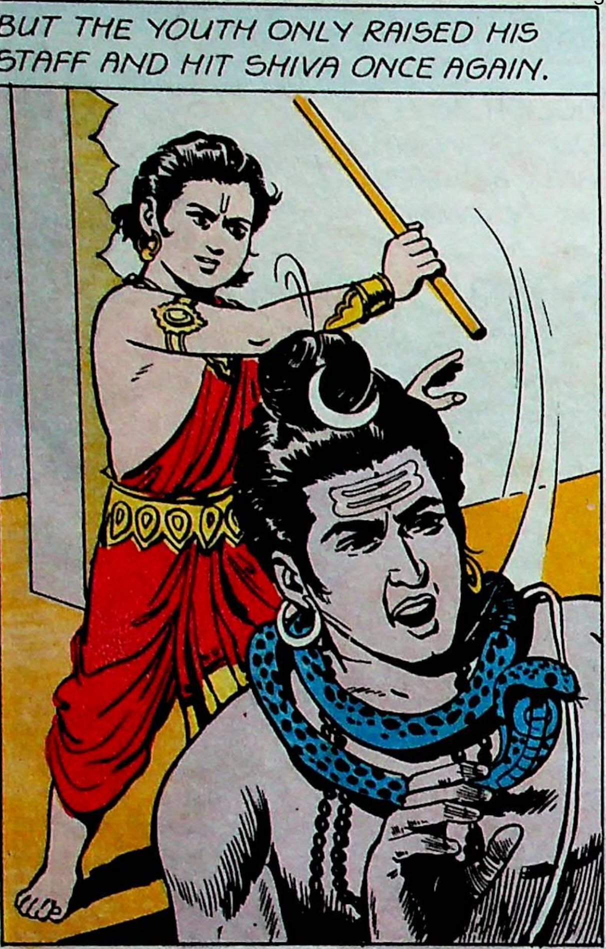

WHO COULD THAT BOY BE? I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.


TO SHIVA'S ASTONISHMENT, THE YOUTH BARRED HIS WAY.
HALT! NO ONE ENTERS WITHOUT MY MOTHER'S PERMISSION.

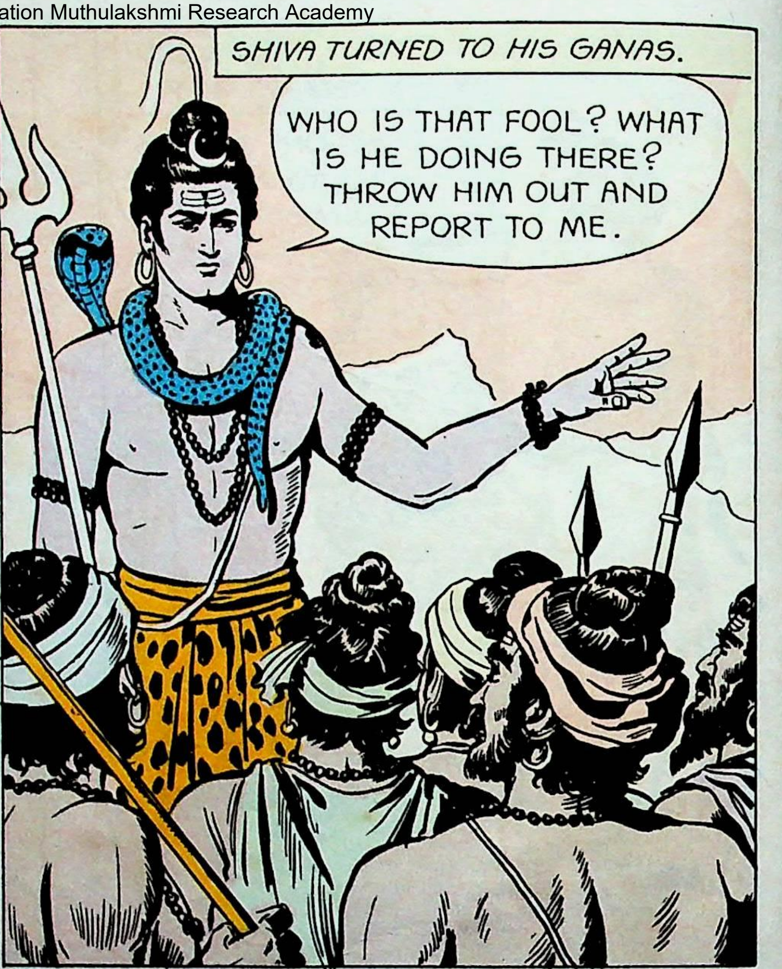

SHIVA WAS TAKEN ABACK.
FOOLISH BOY! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? MOVE OUT OF MY WAY.


WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD, THE YOUTH STRUCK SHIVA WITH HIS STAFF.


SHIVA WAS FURIOUS.
FOOL! I AM SHIVA, PARVATI'S HUSBAND. HOW DARE YOU FORBID ME TO ENTER MY OWN HOME!

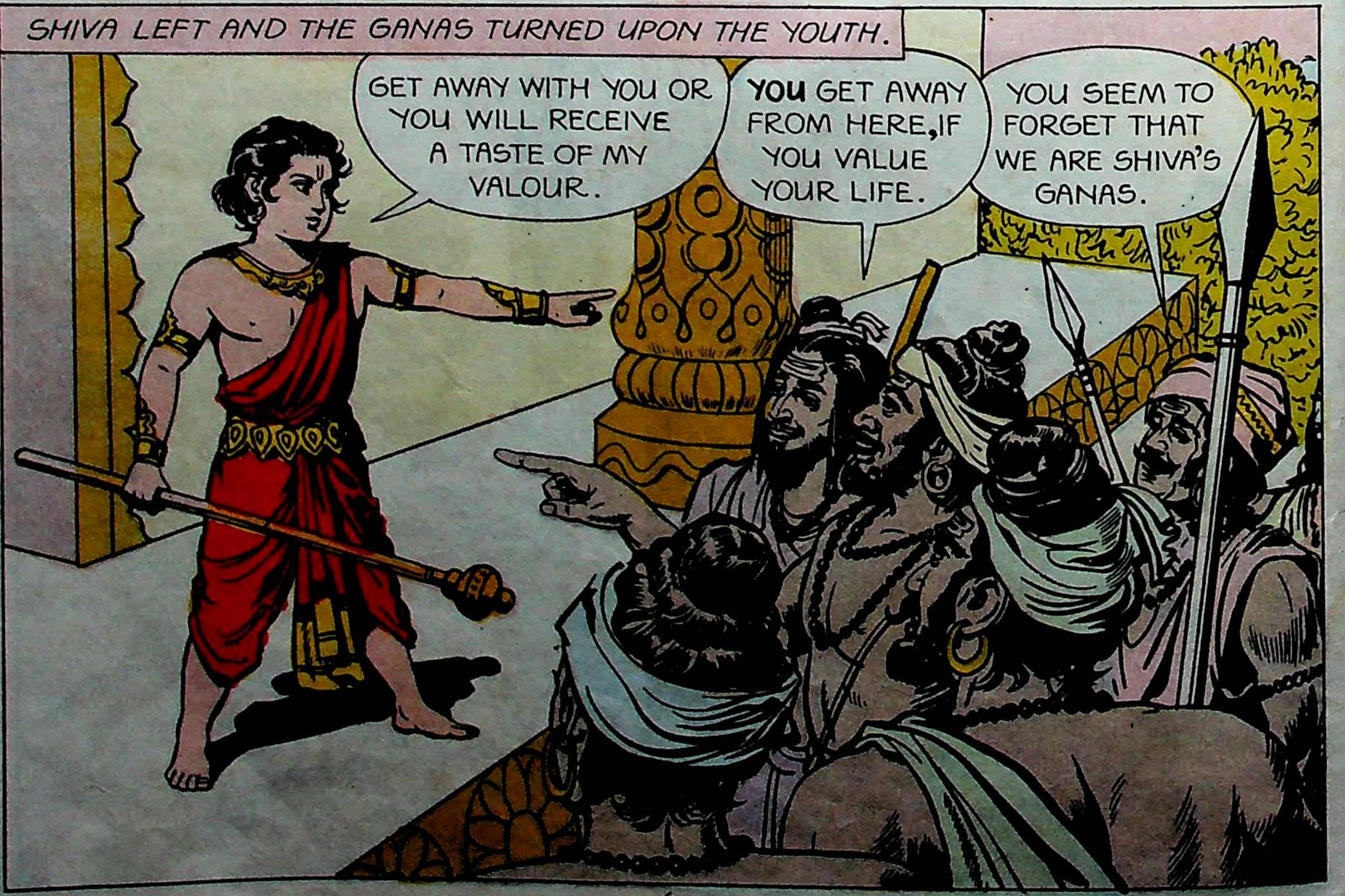


BUT THE YOUTH ONLY RAISED HIS STAFF AND HIT SHIVA ONCE AGAIN.



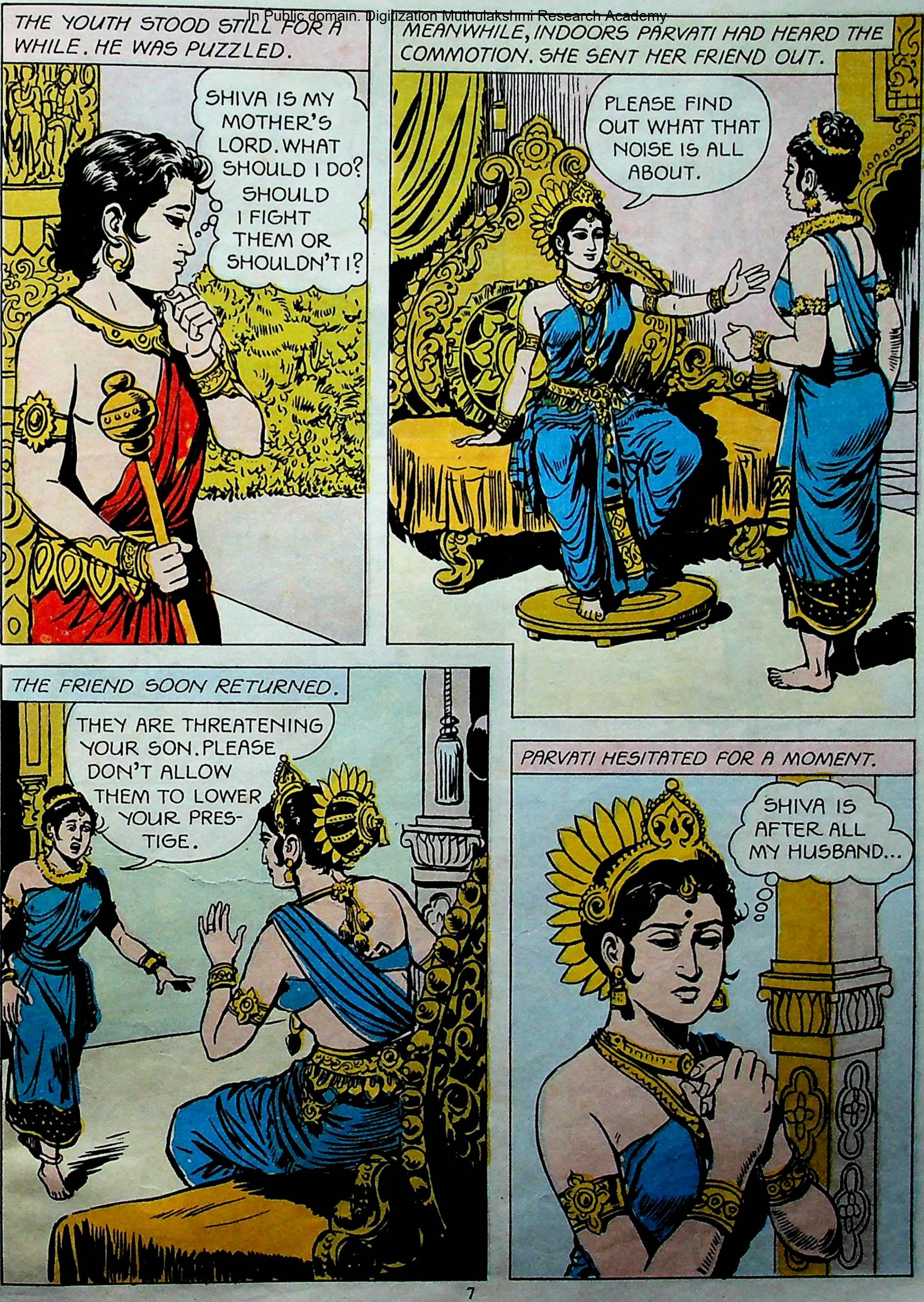
SHIVA TURNED TO HIS GANAS.

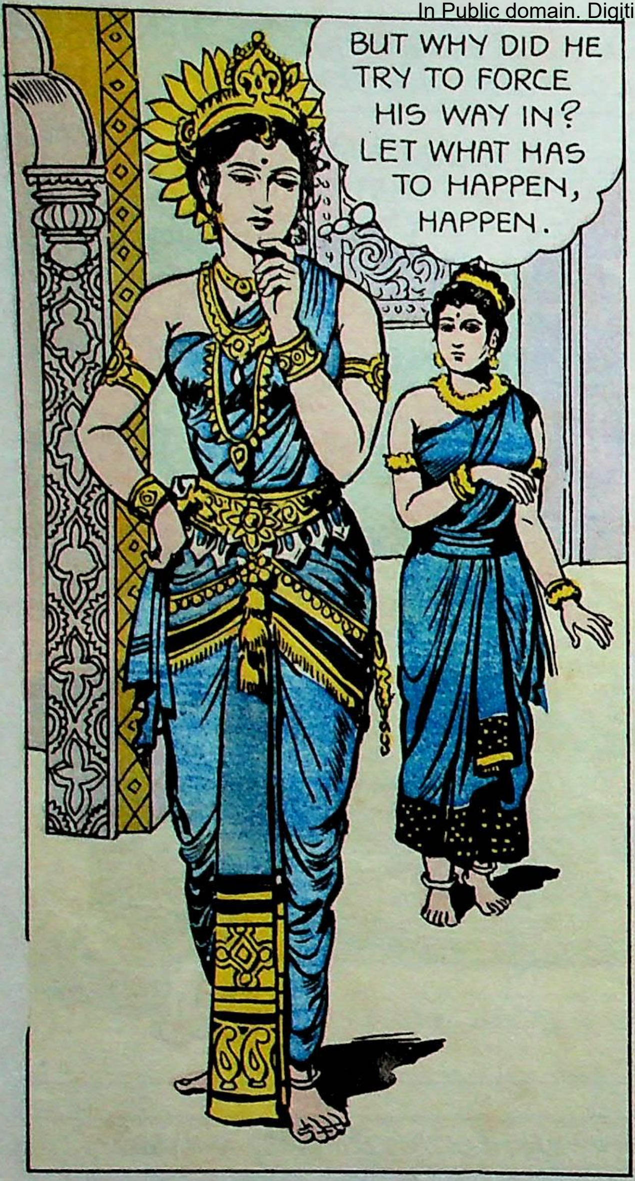
WHO IS THAT FOOL? WHAT IS HE DOING THERE? THROW HIM OUT AND REPORT TO ME.

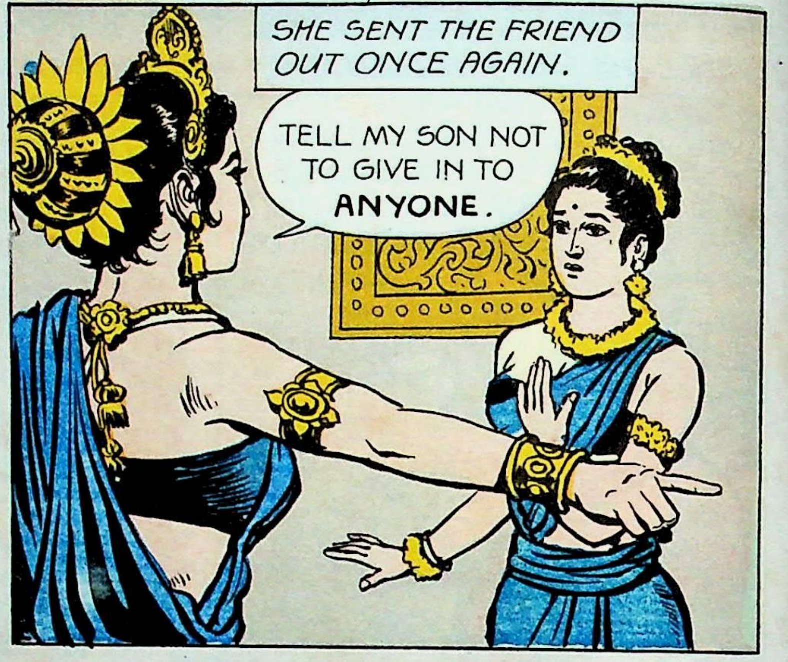


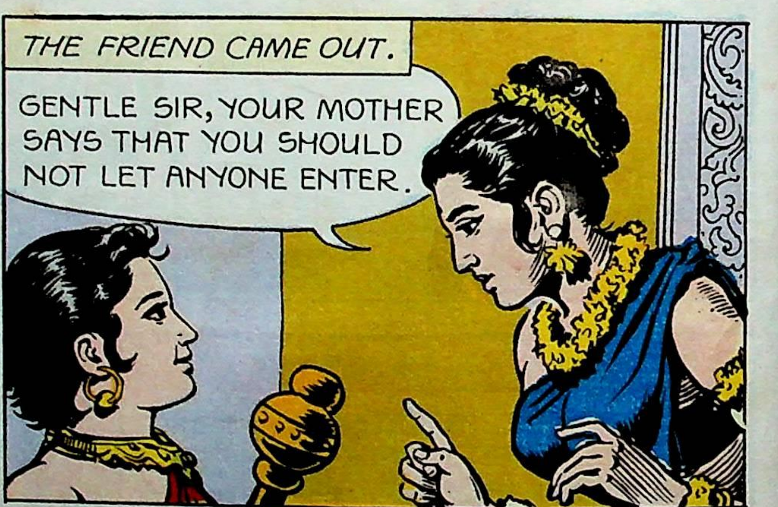
SHIVA LEFT AND THE GANAS TURNED UPON THE YOUTH.

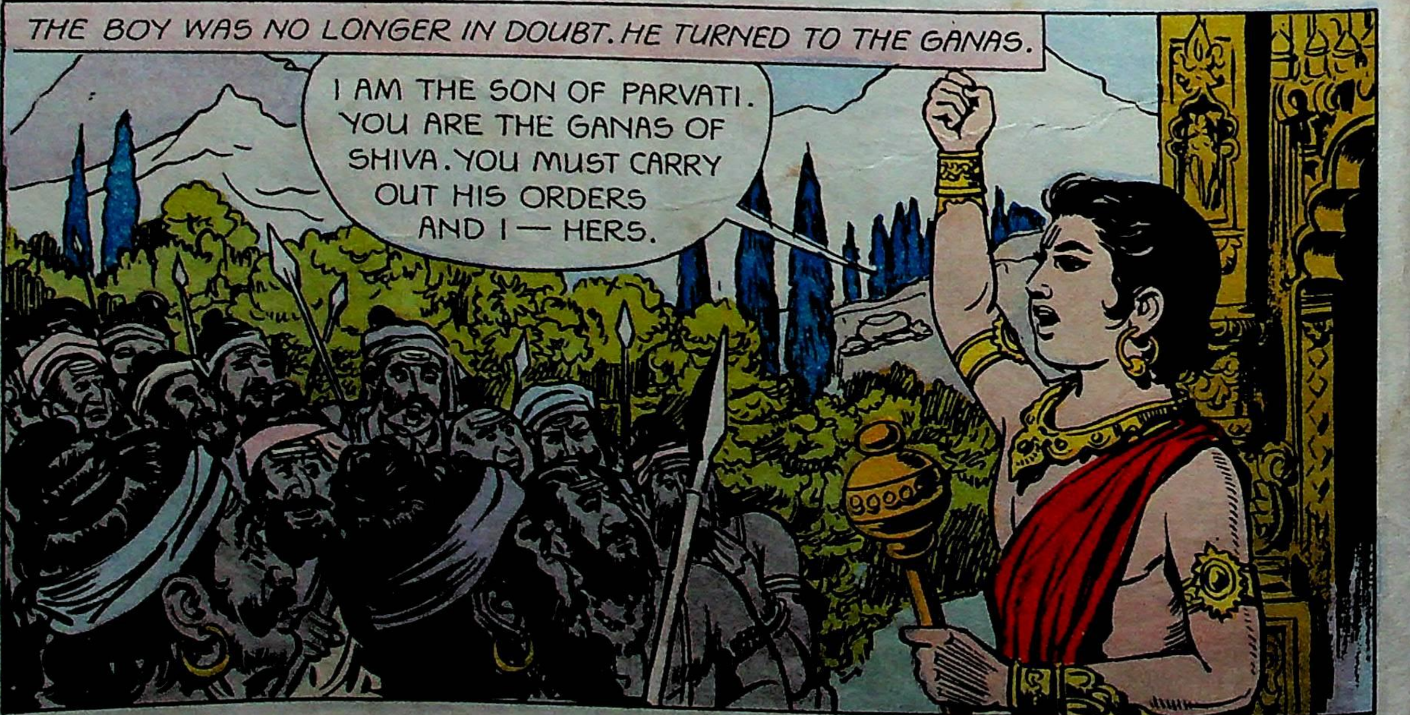
GET AWAY WITH YOU OR YOU WILL RECEIVE A TASTE OF MY VALOUR.
YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE.
YOU SEEM TO FORGET THAT WE ARE SHIVA'S GANAS.

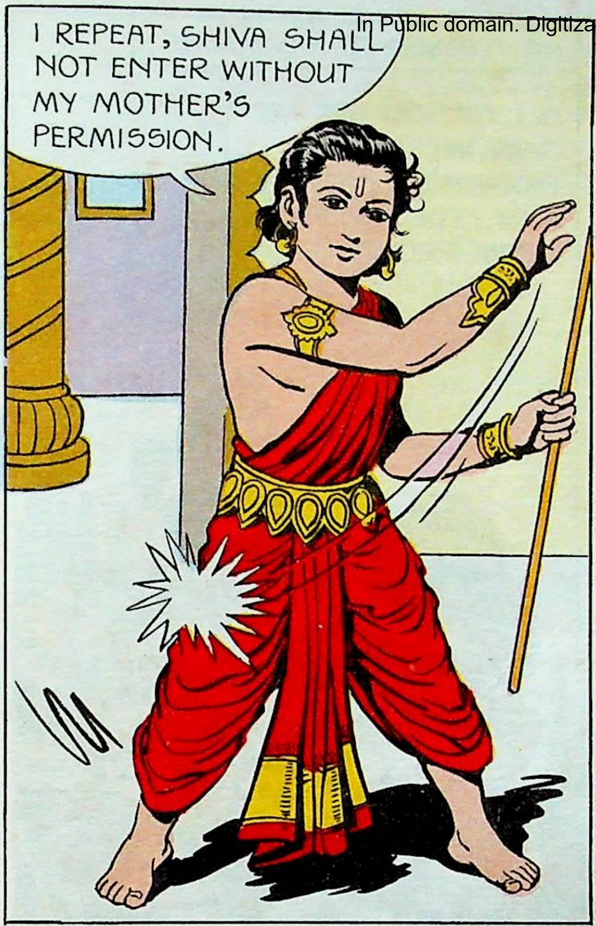

THE YOUTH STOOD STILL FOR A WHILE. HE WAS PUZZLED.
SHIVA IS MY MOTHER'S LORD. WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHOULD I FIGHT THEM OR SHOULDN'T I?
MEANWHILE, INDOORS PARVATI HAD HEARD THE COMMOTION. SHE SENT HER FRIEND OUT.
PLEASE FIND OUT WHAT THAT NOISE IS ALL ABOUT.
THE FRIEND SOON RETURNED.
THEY ARE THREATENING YOUR SON. PLEASE DON'T ALLOW THEM TO LOWER YOUR PRESTIGE.
PARVATI HESITATED FOR A MOMENT.
SHIVA IS AFTER ALL MY HUSBAND...

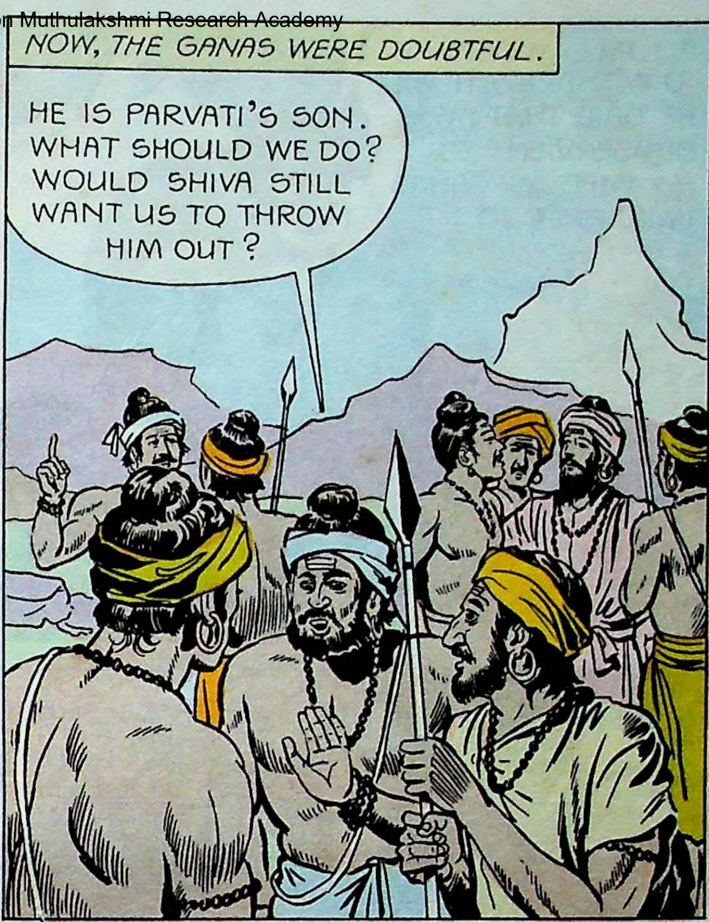

BUT WHY DID HE TRY TO FORCE HIS WAY IN? LET WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN, HAPPEN.

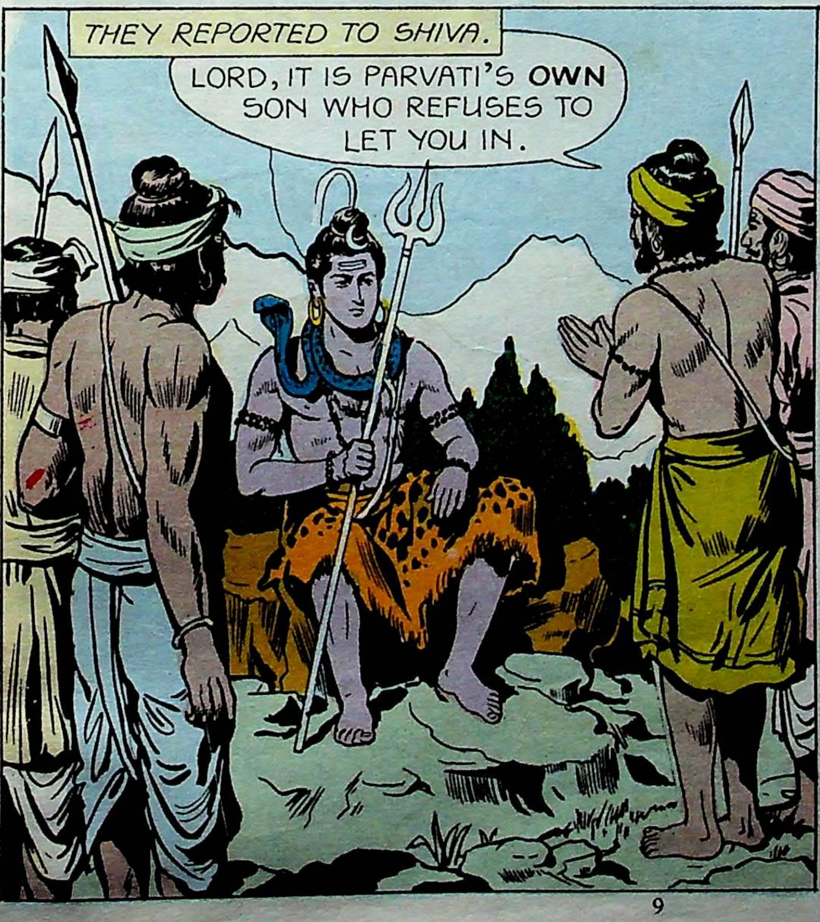

SHE SENT THE FRIEND OUT ONCE AGAIN.
TELL MY SON NOT TO GIVE IN TO **ANYONE**.

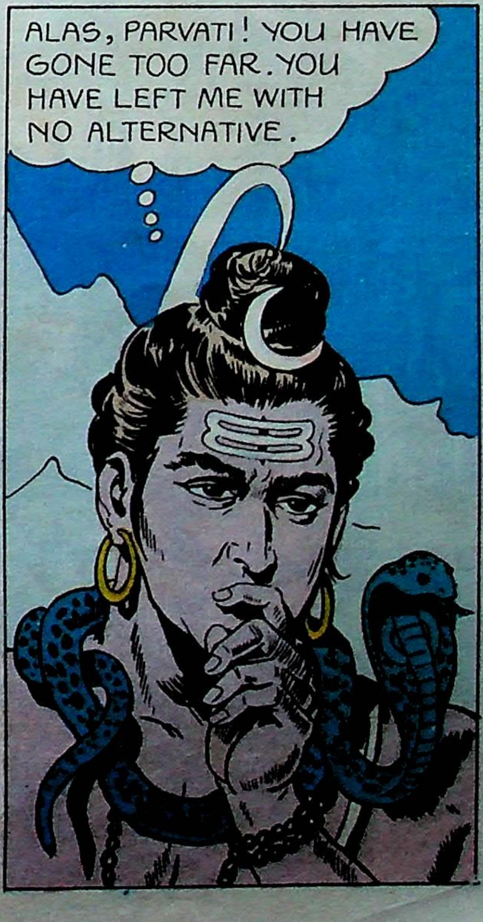

THE FRIEND CAME OUT.
GENTLE SIR, YOUR MOTHER SAYS THAT YOU SHOULD NOT LET ANYONE ENTER.

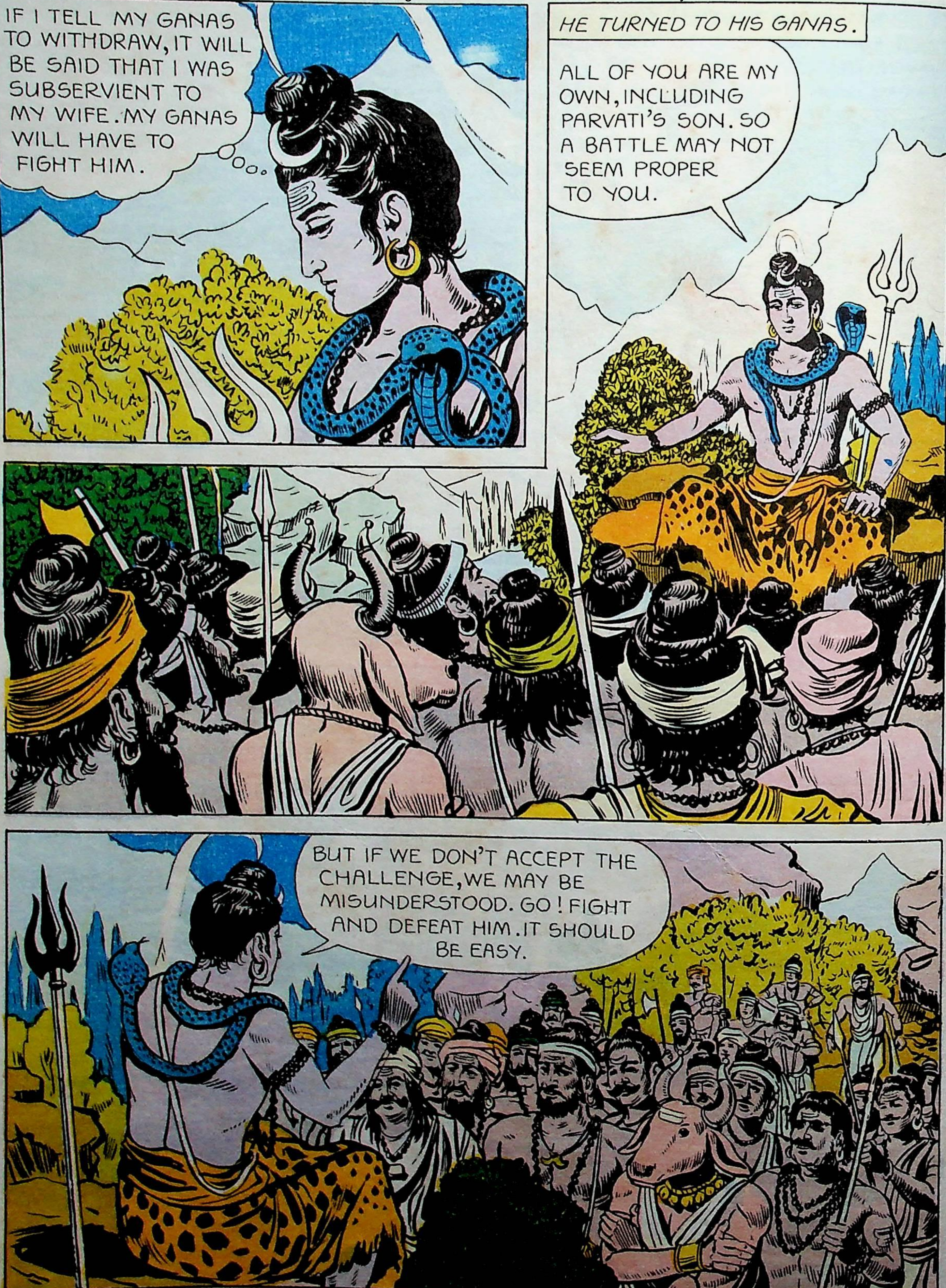

THE BOY WAS NO LONGER IN DOUBT. HE TURNED TO THE GANAS.
I AM THE SON OF PARVATI. YOU ARE THE GANAS OF SHIVA. YOU MUST CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS AND I — HERS.

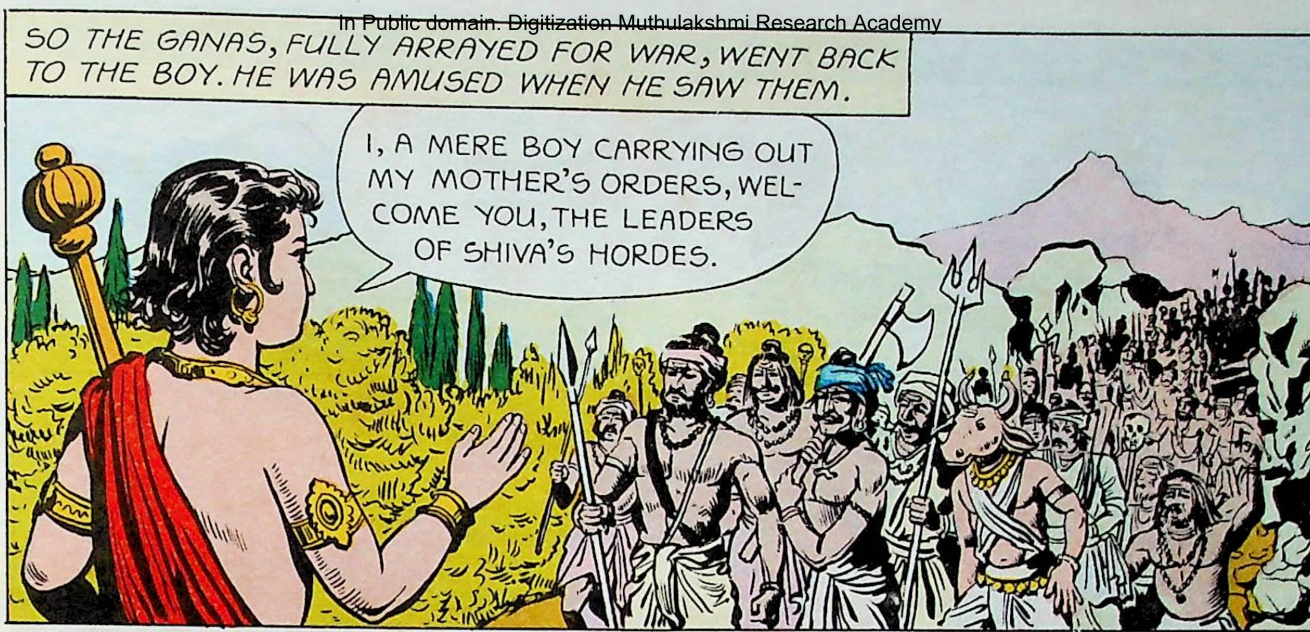

I REPEAT, SHIVA SHALL NOT ENTER WITHOUT MY MOTHER'S PERMISSION.

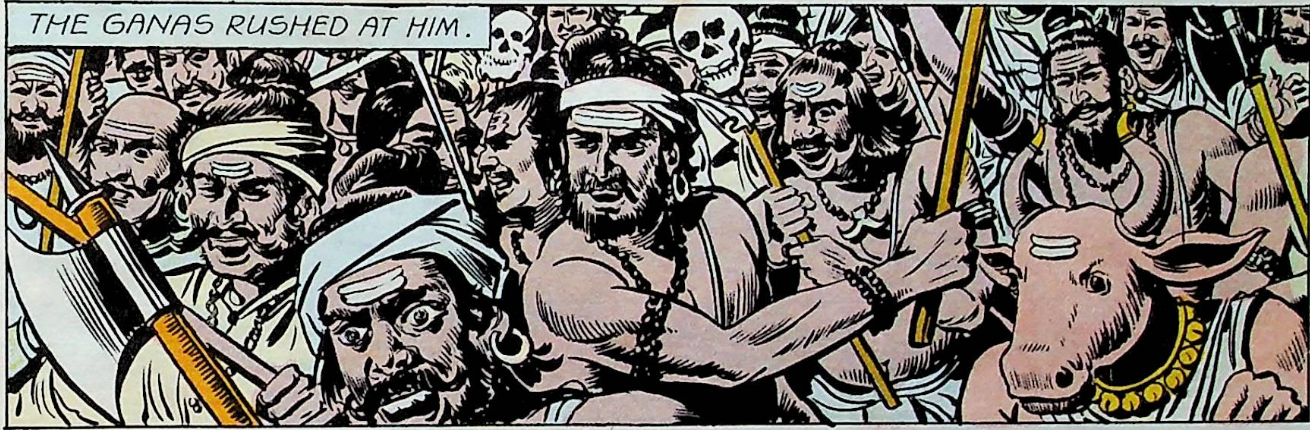

NOW, THE GANAS WERE DOUBTFUL.
HE IS PARVATI'S SON. WHAT SHOULD WE DO? WOULD SHIVA STILL WANT US TO THROW HIM OUT?

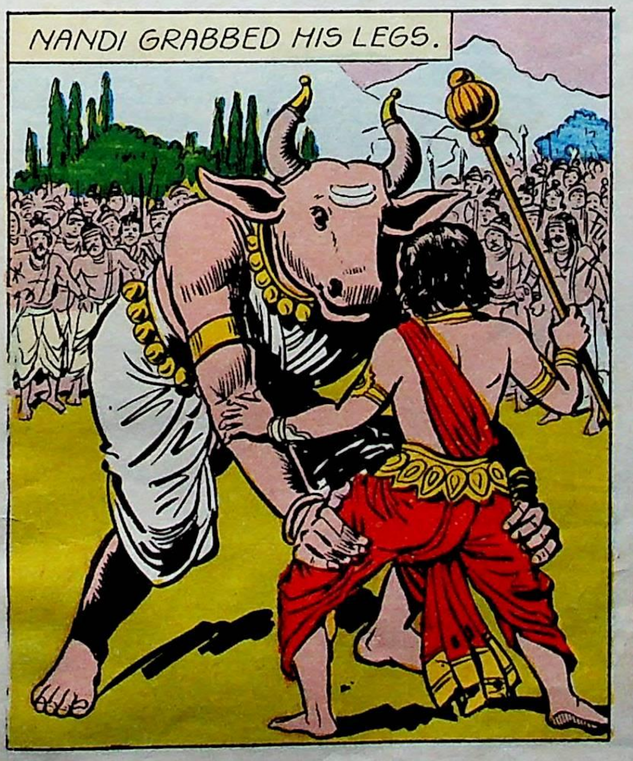

THEY REPORTED TO SHIVA.
LORD, IT IS PARVATI'S **OWN** SON WHO REFUSES TO LET YOU IN.

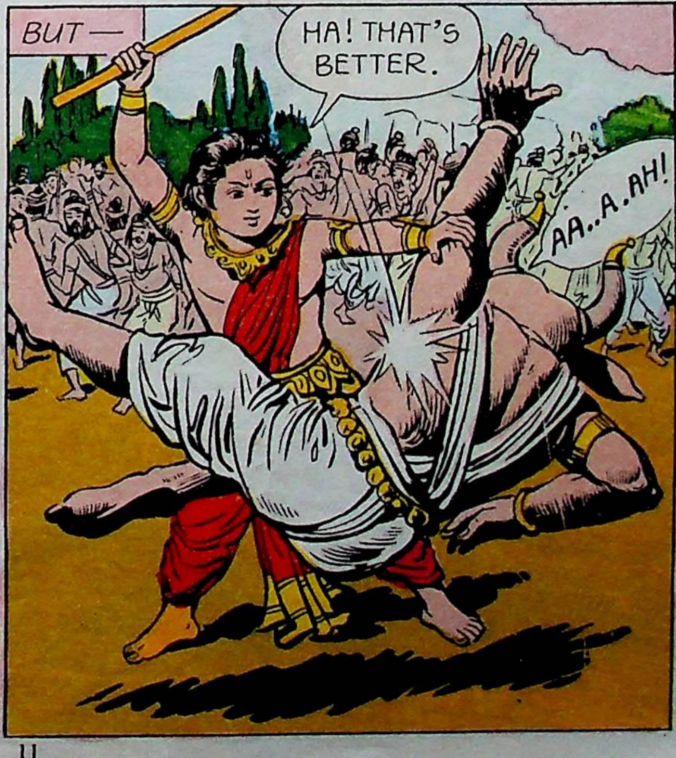

ALAS, PARVATI! YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR. YOU HAVE LEFT ME WITH NO ALTERNATIVE.


IF I TELL MY GANAS TO WITHDRAW, IT WILL BE SAID THAT I WAS SUBSERVIENT TO MY WIFE. MY GANAS WILL HAVE TO FIGHT HIM.
HE TURNED TO HIS GANAS.
ALL OF YOU ARE MY OWN, INCLUDING PARVATI'S SON. SO A BATTLE MAY NOT SEEM PROPER TO YOU.
BUT IF WE DON'T ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, WE MAY BE MISUNDERSTOOD. GO! FIGHT AND DEFEAT HIM. IT SHOULD BE EASY.

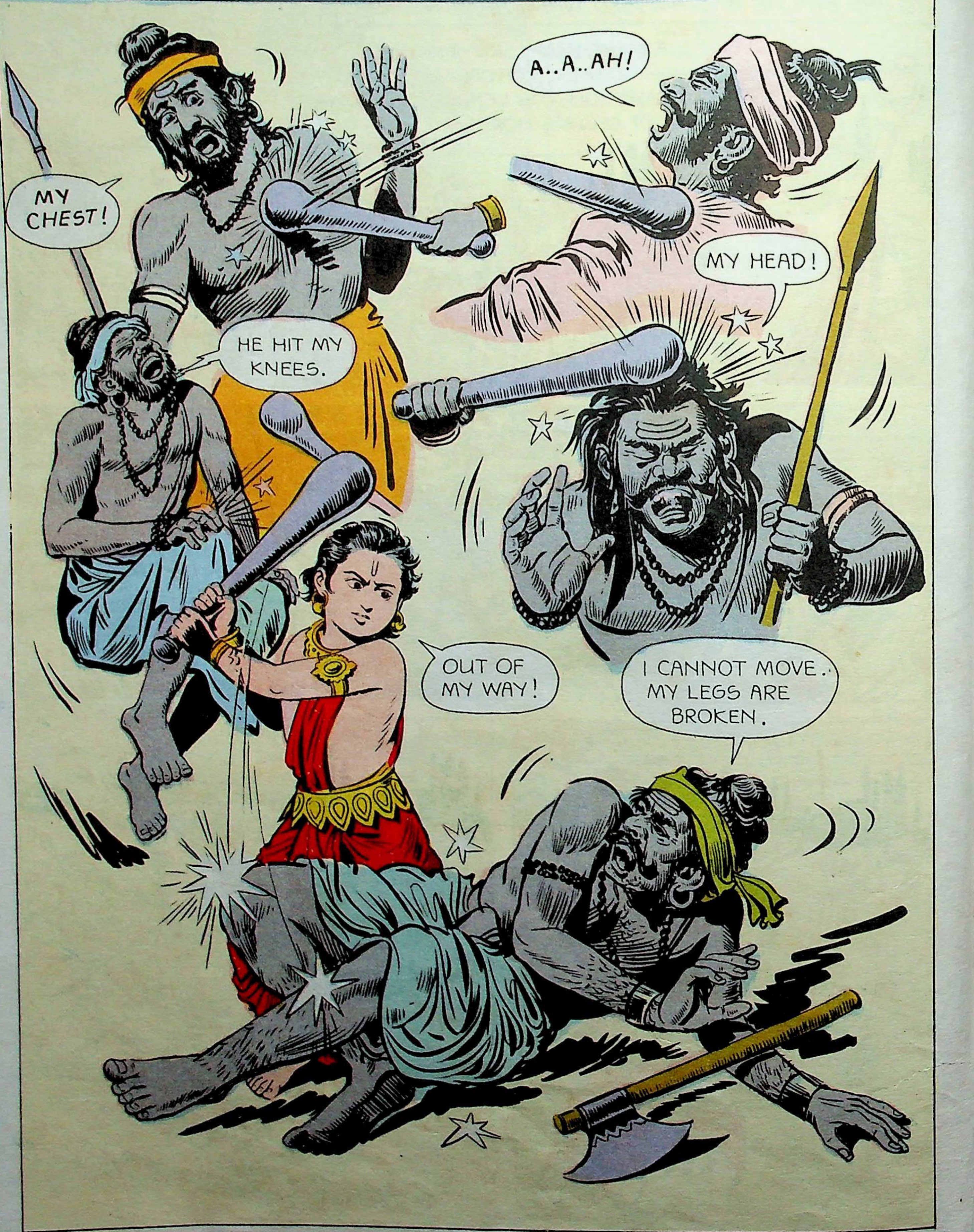

SO THE GANAS, FULLY ARRAYED FOR WAR, WENT BACK TO THE BOY. HE WAS AMUSED WHEN HE SAW THEM.
I, A MERE BOY CARRYING OUT MY MOTHER'S ORDERS, WELCOME YOU, THE LEADERS OF SHIVA'S HORDES.

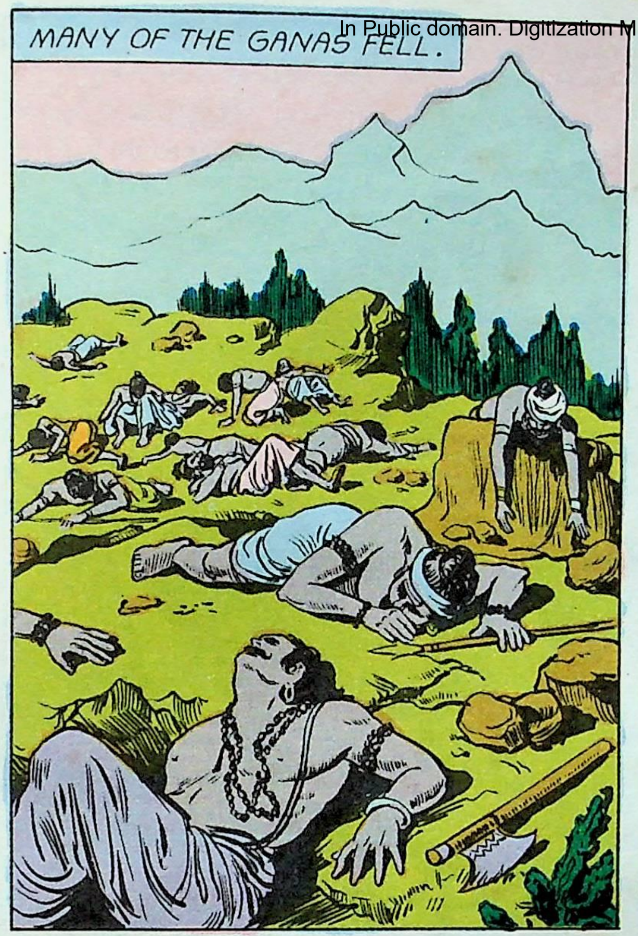

THE GANAS RUSHED AT HIM.


NANDI GRABBED HIS LEGS.

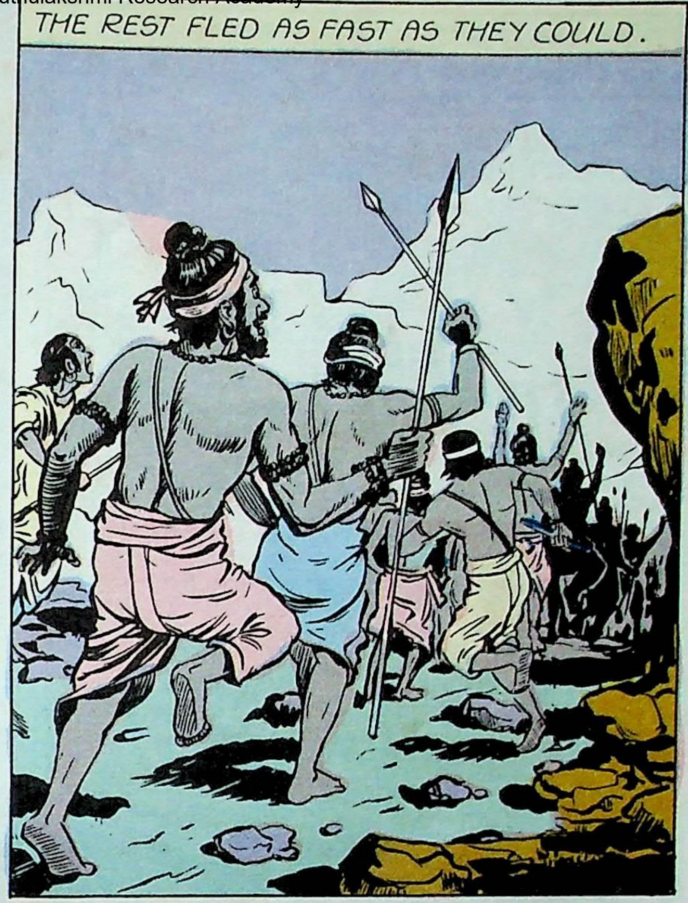

BUT —
HA! THAT'S BETTER.
AA..A.AH!

THEN THE BOY SEIZED AN IRON CLUB AND WHIRLED IT ABOUT.

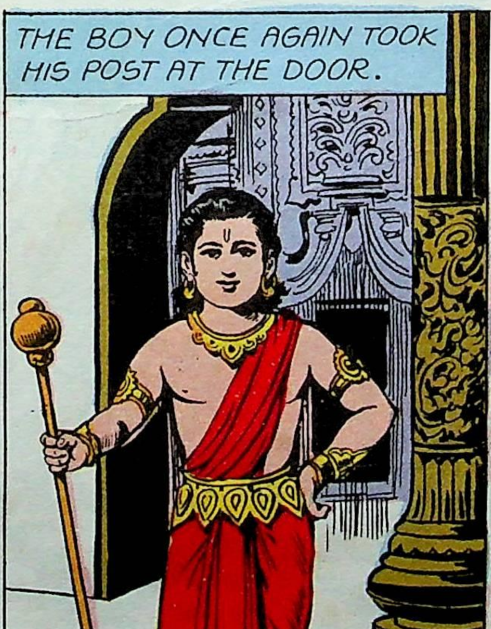

MY CHEST!
A..A..AH!
MY HEAD!
HE HIT MY KNEES.
OUT OF MY WAY!
I CANNOT MOVE. MY LEGS ARE BROKEN.



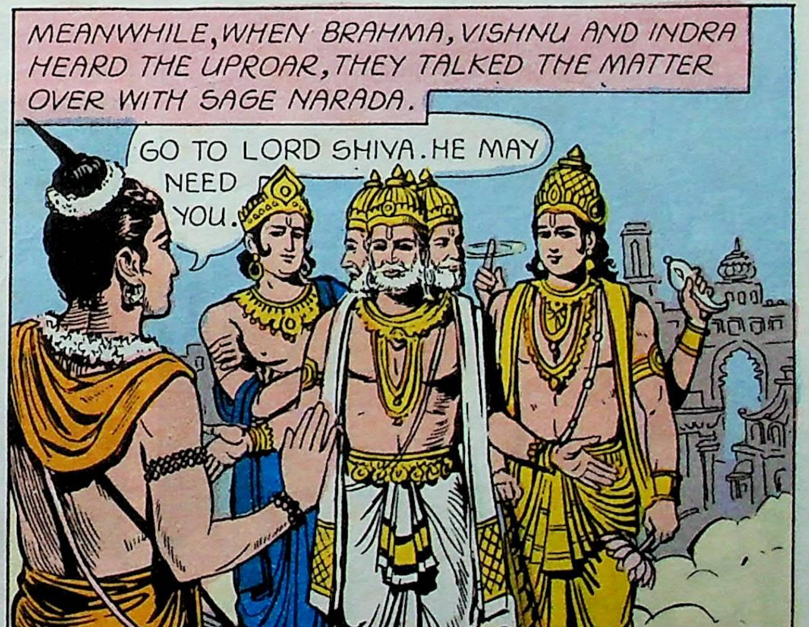
MANY OF THE GANAS FELL.



THE REST FLED AS FAST AS THEY COULD.

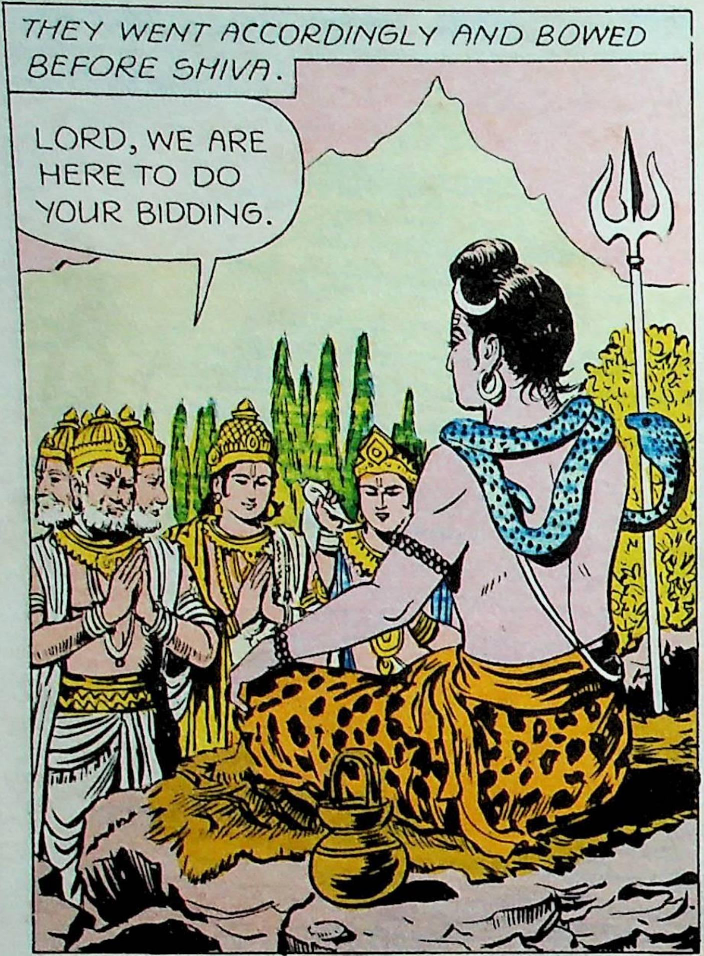


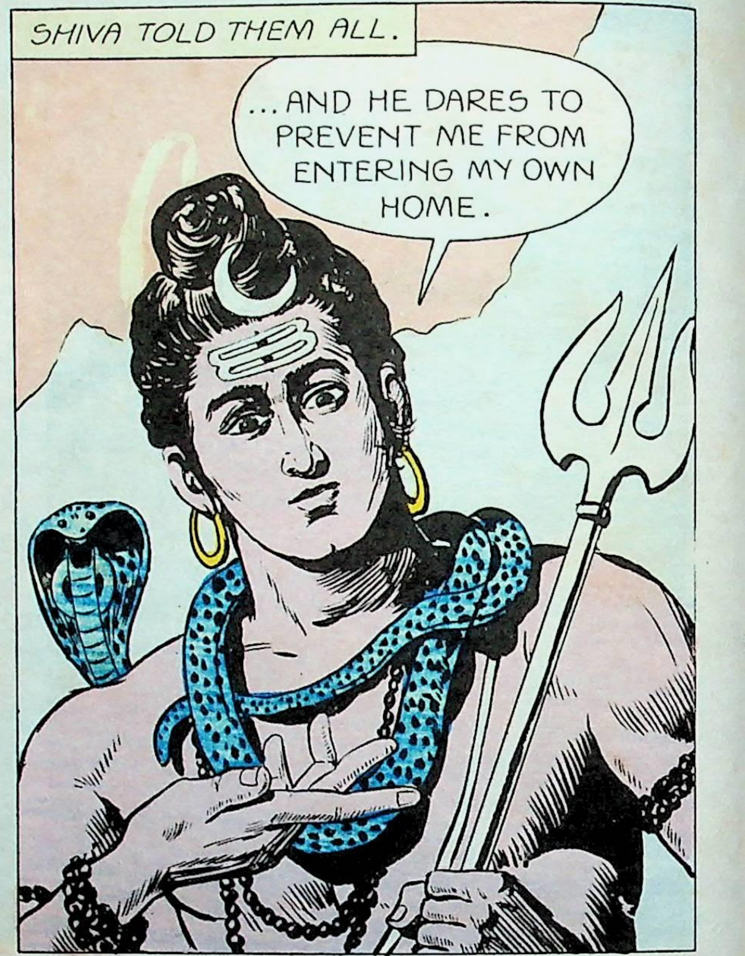
THE BOY ONCE AGAIN TOOK HIS POST AT THE DOOR.

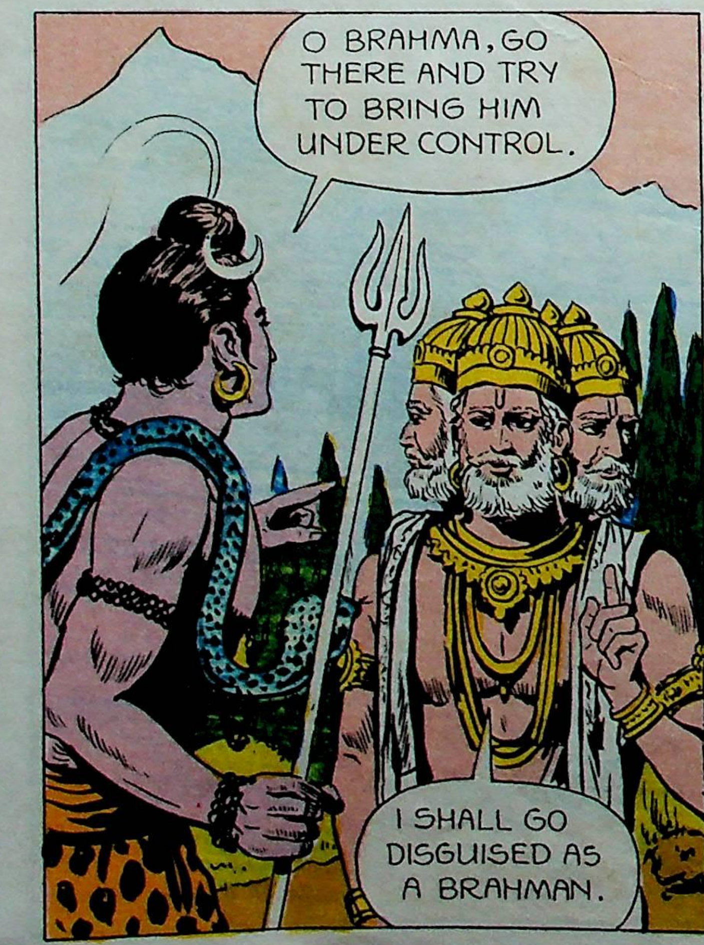


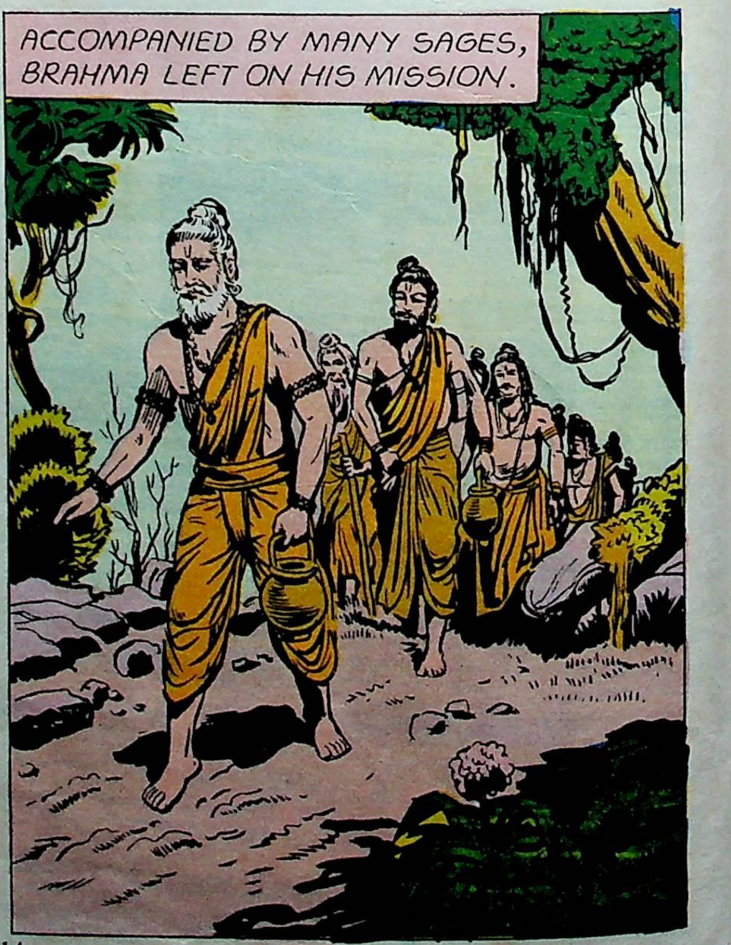
MEANWHILE, WHEN BRAHMA, VISHNU AND INDRA HEARD THE UPROAR, THEY TALKED THE MATTER OVER WITH SAGE NARADA.

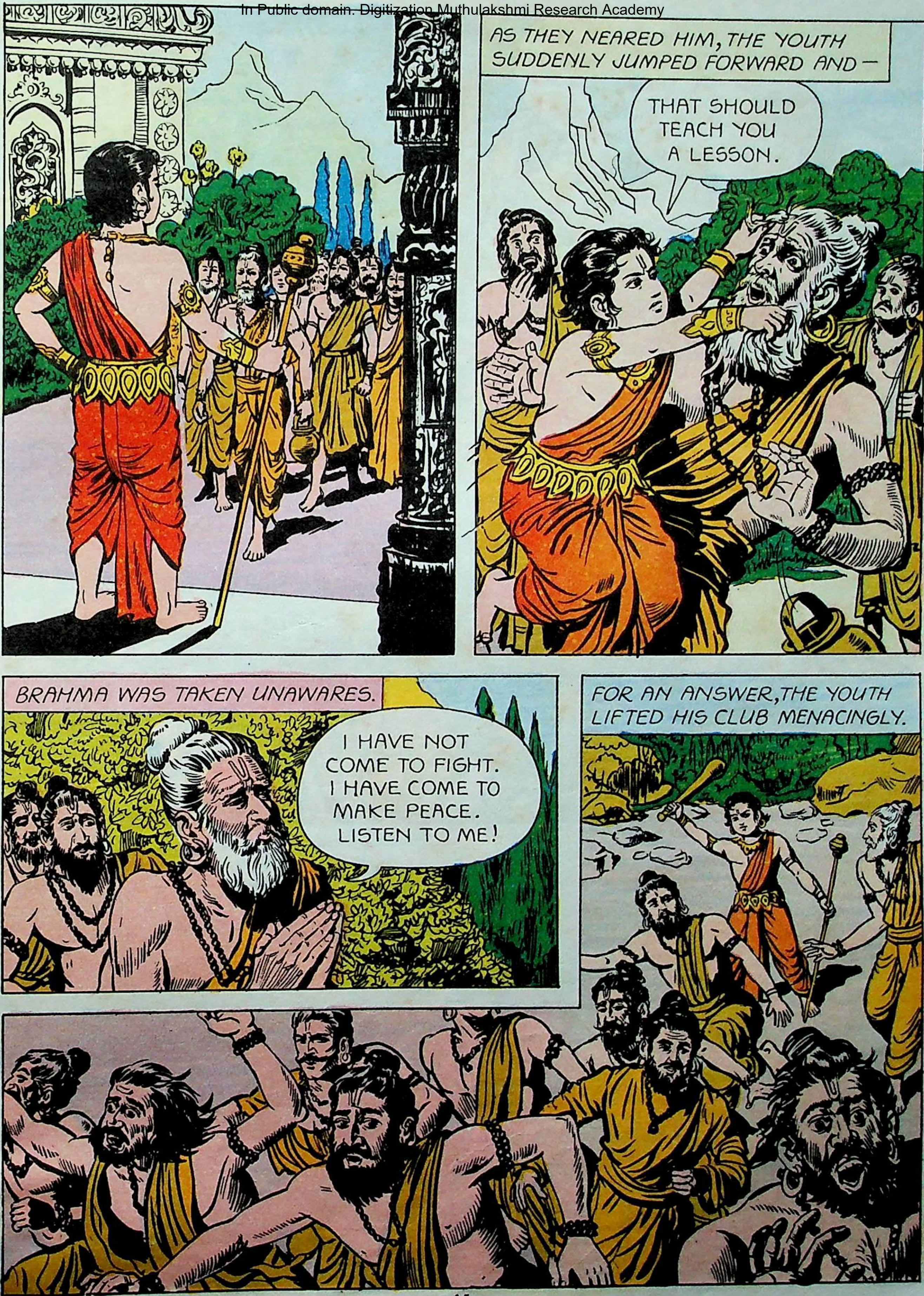
GO TO LORD SHIVA. HE MAY NEED YOU.

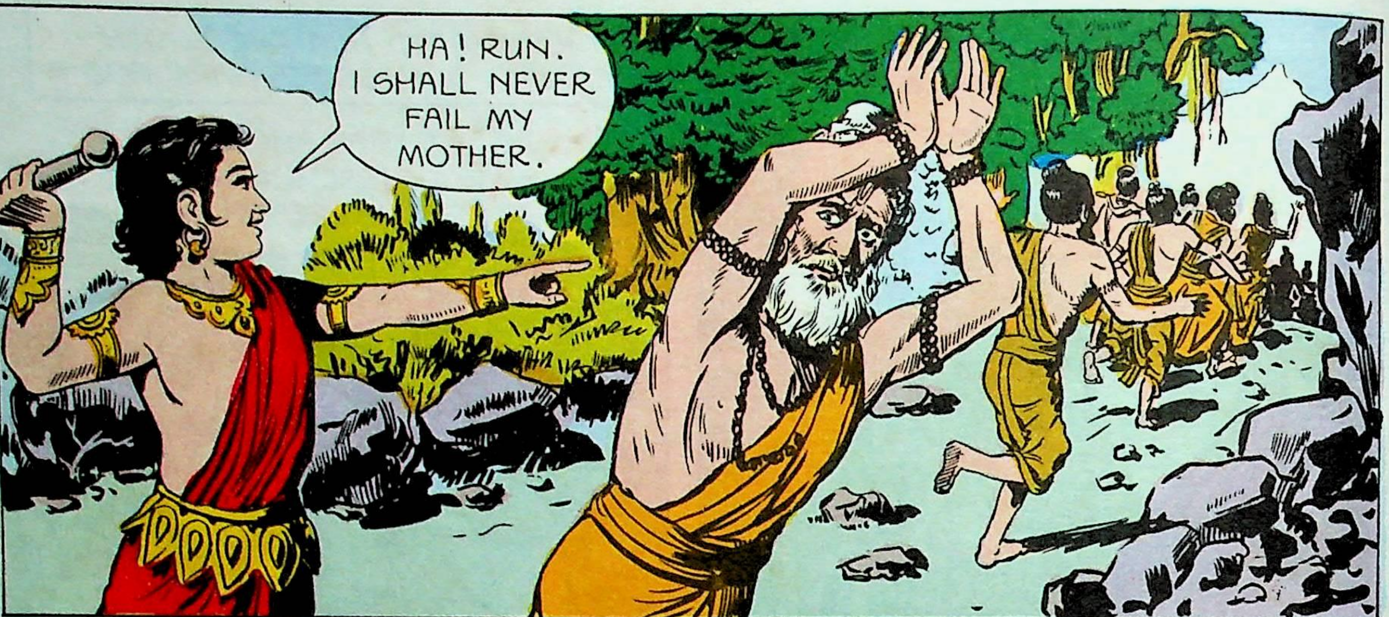

THEY WENT ACCORDINGLY AND BOWED BEFORE SHIVA.
LORD, WE ARE HERE TO DO YOUR BIDDING.

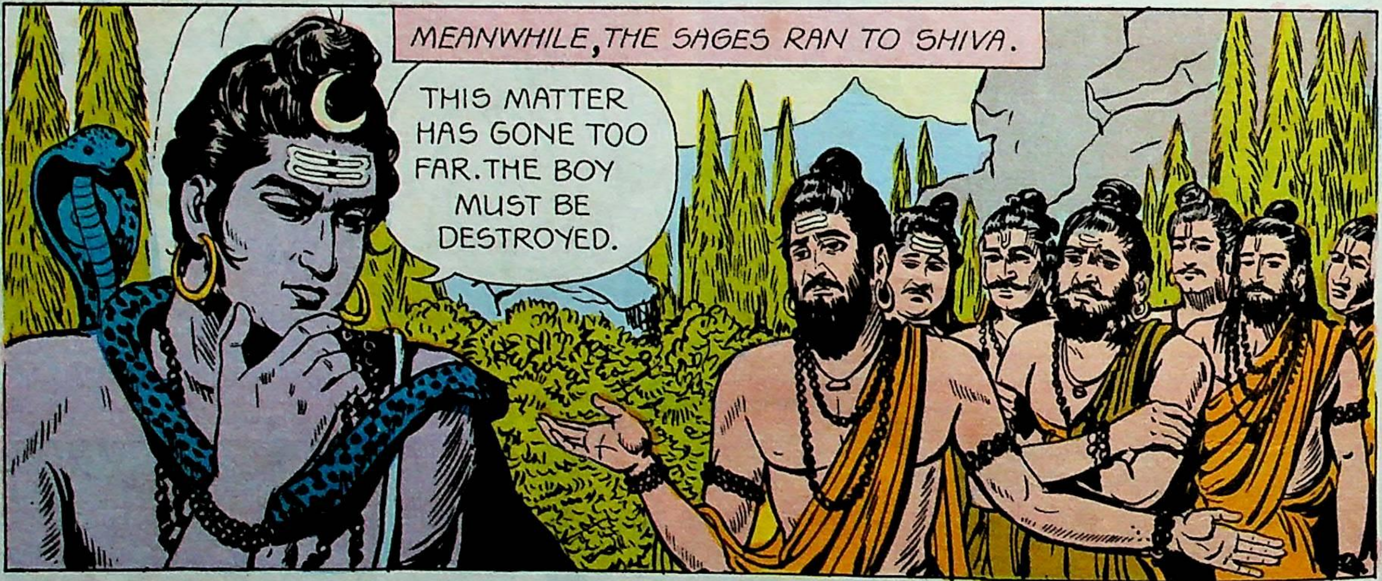

SHIVA TOLD THEM ALL.
...AND HE DARES TO PREVENT ME FROM ENTERING MY OWN HOME.


O BRAHMA, GO THERE AND TRY TO BRING HIM UNDER CONTROL.
I SHALL GO DISGUISED AS A BRAHMAN.

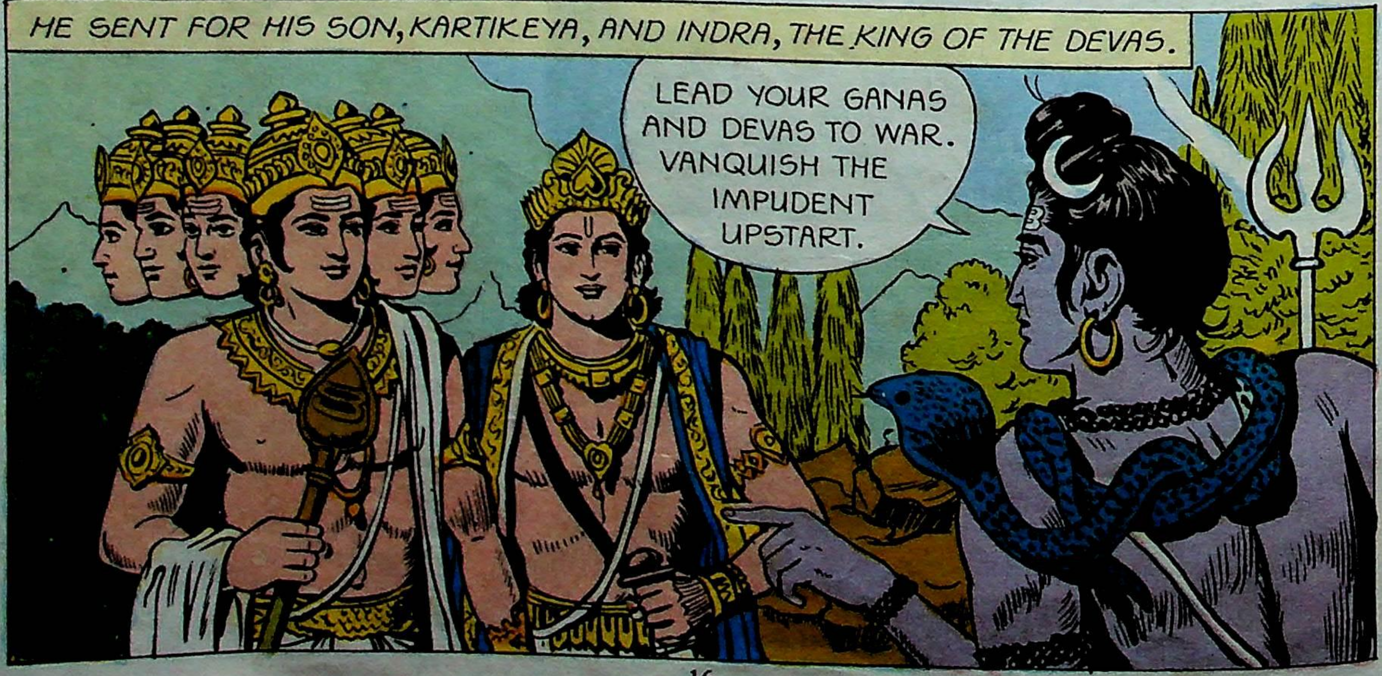

ACCOMPANIED BY MANY SAGES, BRAHMA LEFT ON HIS MISSION.


AS THEY NEARED HIM, THE YOUTH SUDDENLY JUMPED FORWARD AND—
THAT SHOULD TEACH YOU A LESSON.
BRAHMA WAS TAKEN UNAWARES.
I HAVE NOT COME TO FIGHT. I HAVE COME TO MAKE PEACE. LISTEN TO ME!
FOR AN ANSWER, THE YOUTH LIFTED HIS CLUB MENACINGLY.

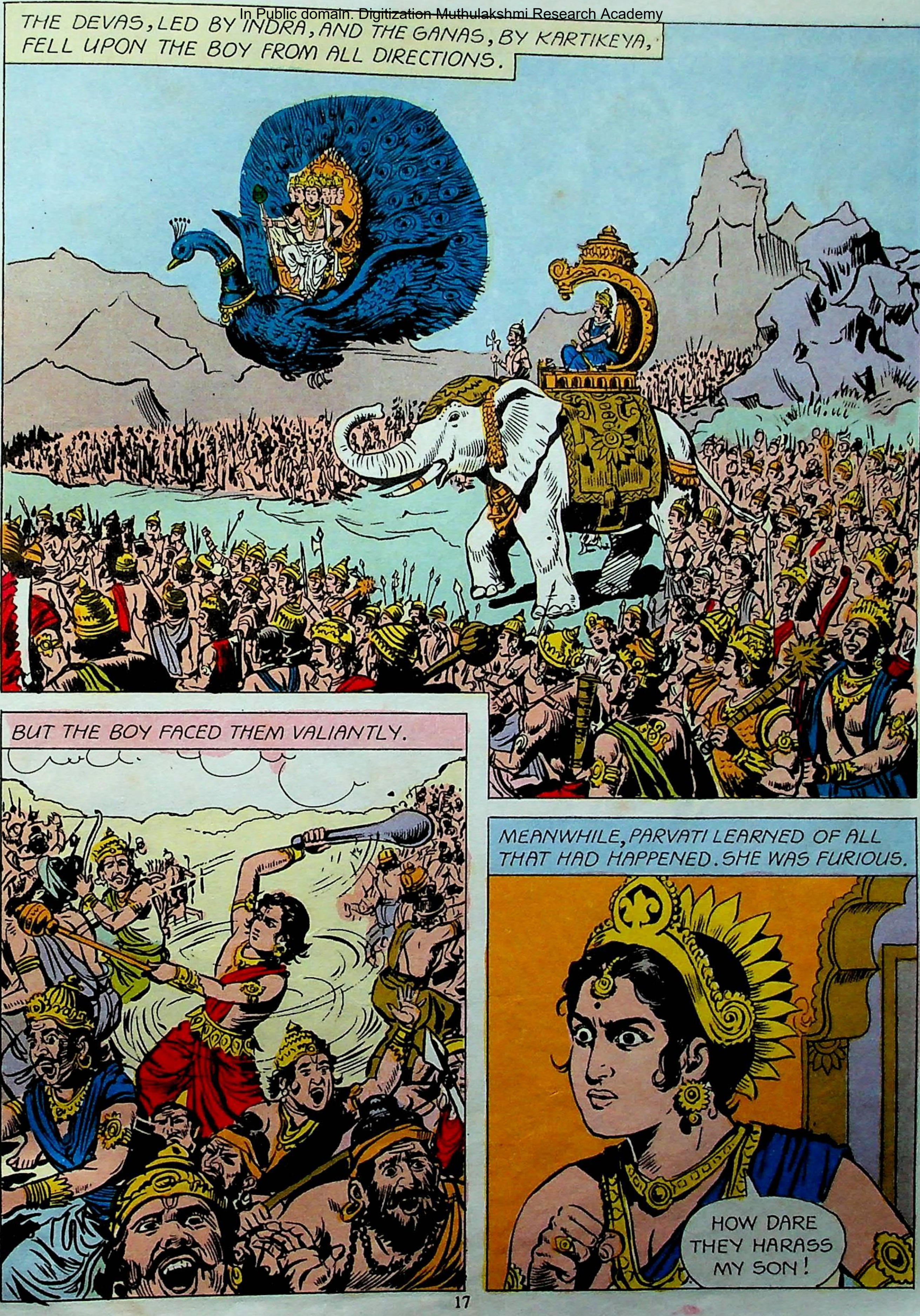

HA! RUN. I SHALL NEVER FAIL MY MOTHER.


MEANWHILE, THE SAGES RAN TO SHIVA.

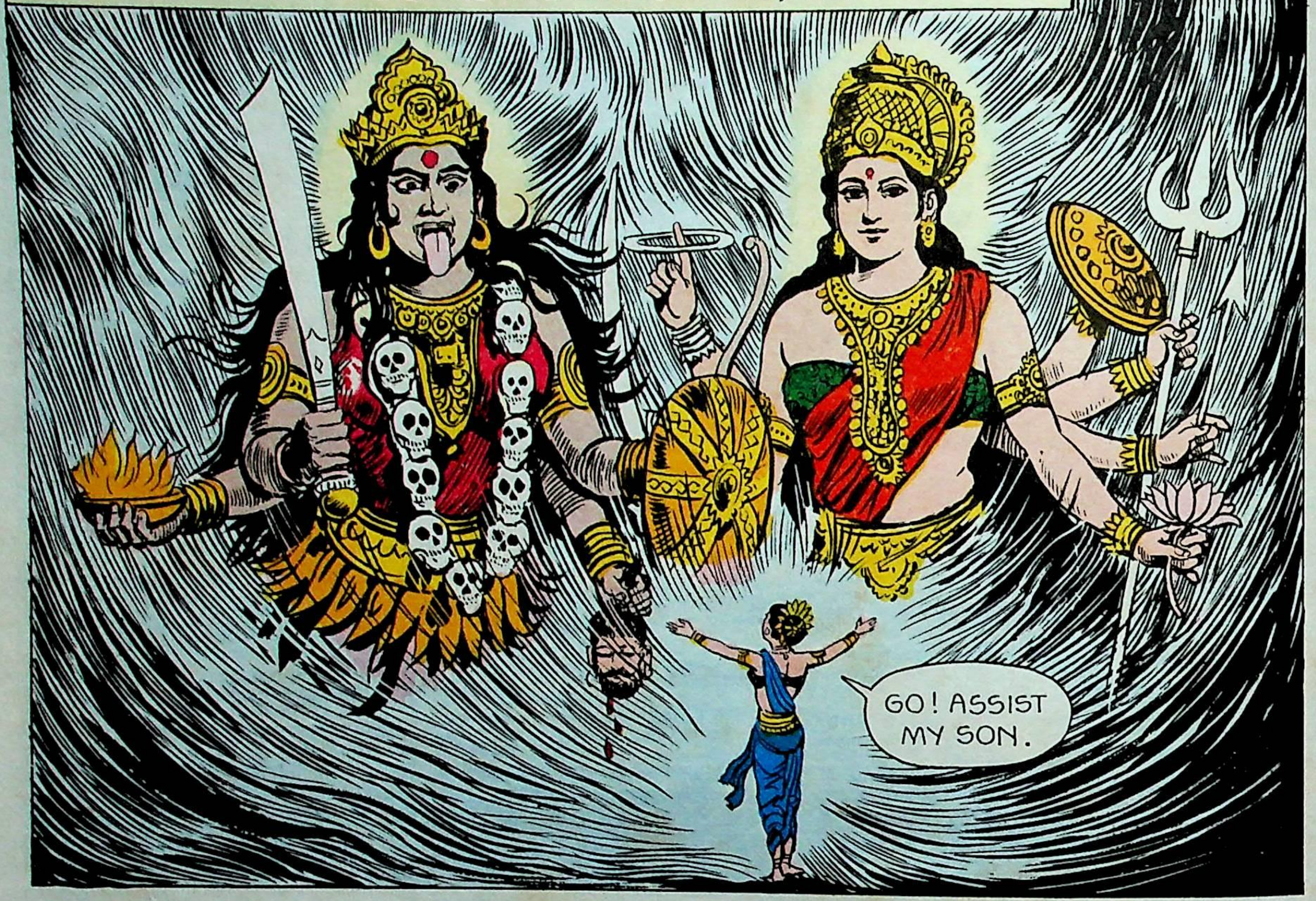
THIS MATTER HAS GONE TOO FAR. THE BOY MUST BE DESTROYED.


HE SENT FOR HIS SON, KARTIKEYA, AND INDRA, THE KING OF THE DEVAS.

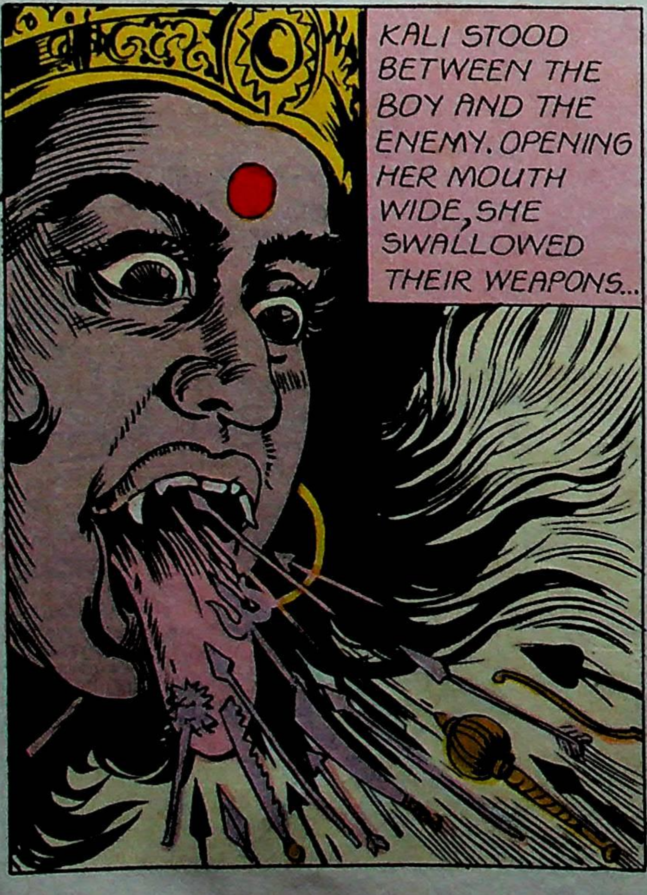
LEAD YOUR GANAS AND DEVAS TO WAR. VANQUISH THE IMPUDENT UPSTART.


THE DEVAS, LED BY INDRA, AND THE GANAS, BY KARTIKEYA, FELL UPON THE BOY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.
BUT THE BOY FACED THEM VALIANTLY.
MEANWHILE, PARVATI LEARNED OF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. SHE WAS FURIOUS.
HOW DARE THEY HARASS MY SON!

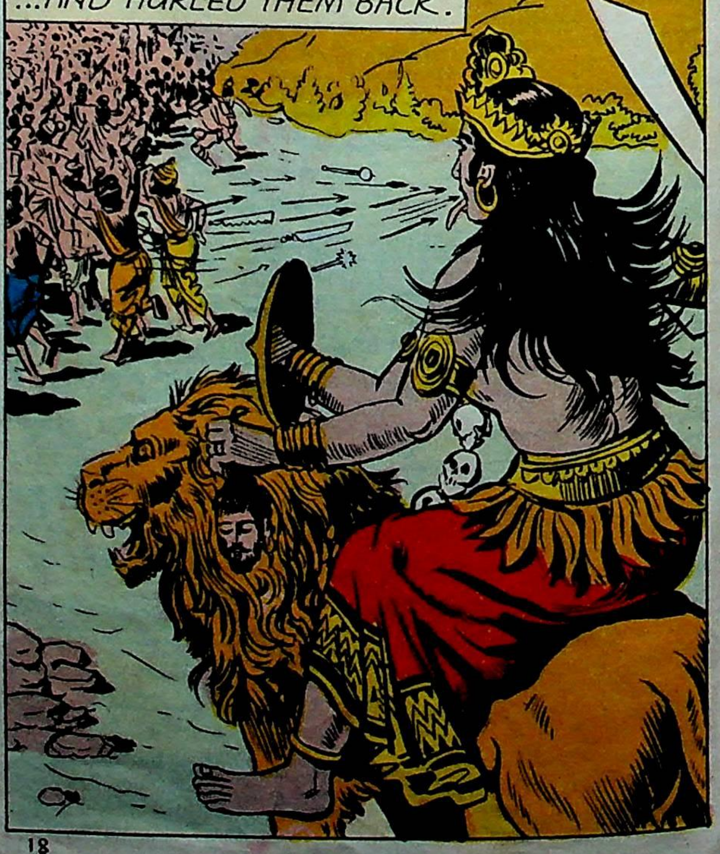
THEN AND THERE SHE CREATED THE TWO SHAKTIS, KALI AND DURGA.

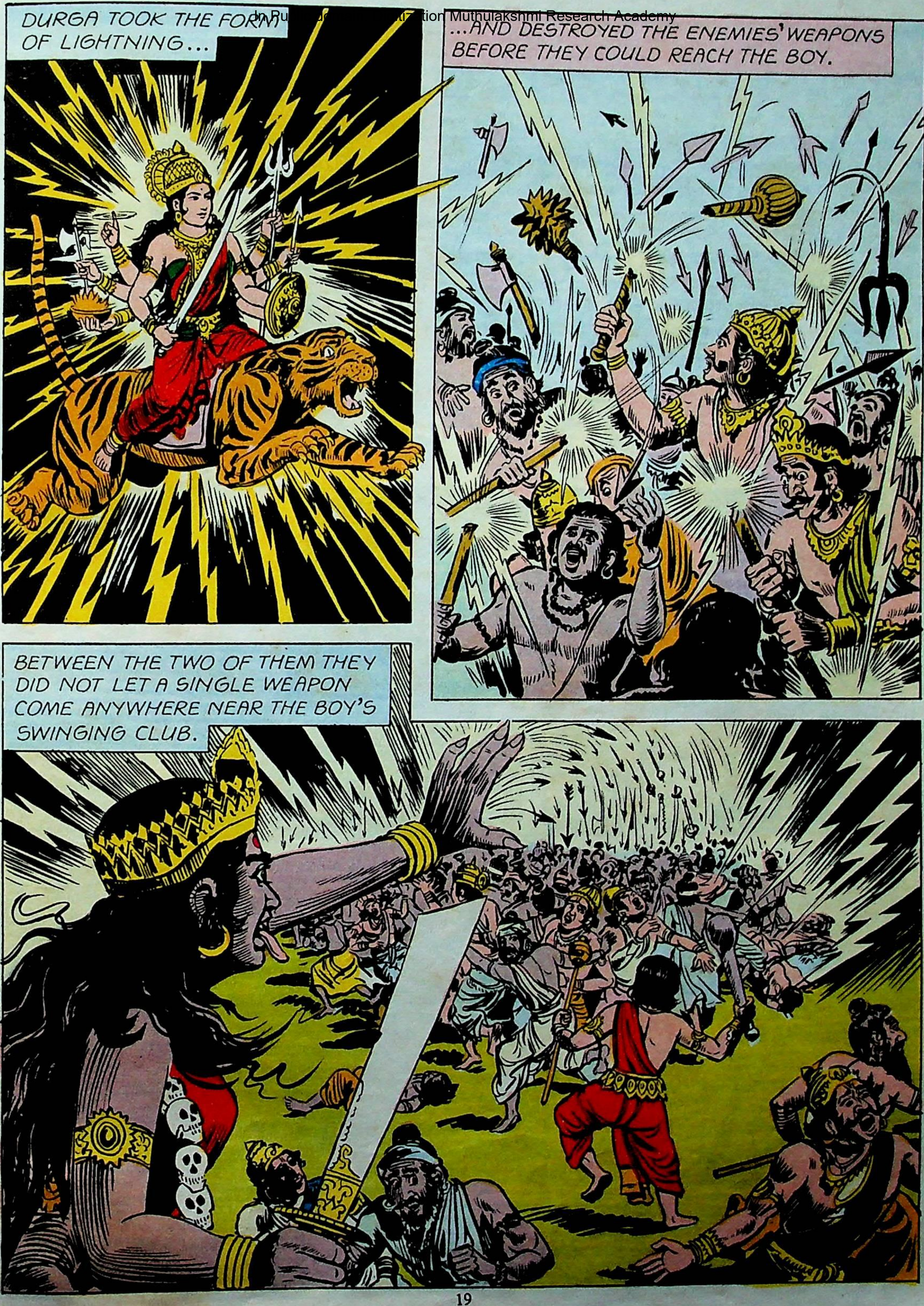

GO! ASSIST MY SON.

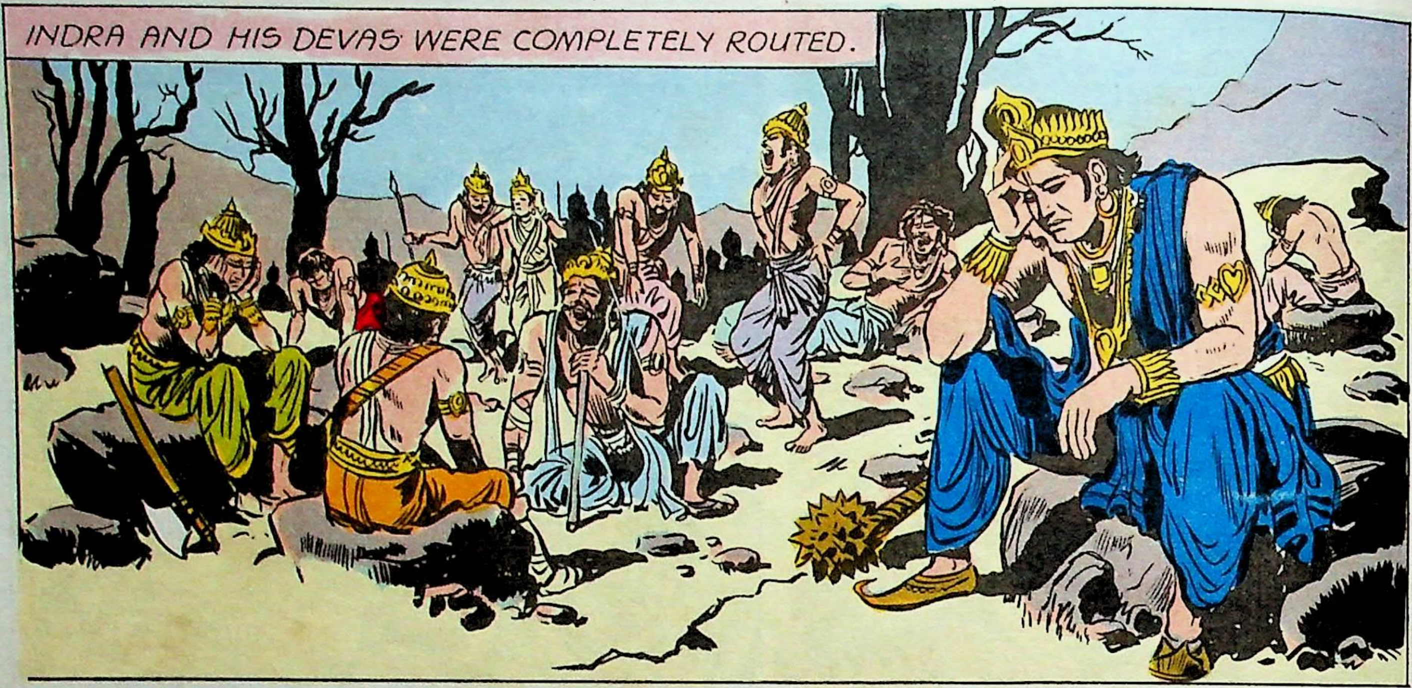
KALI STOOD BETWEEN THE BOY AND THE ENEMY. OPENING HER MOUTH WIDE, SHE SWALLOWED THEIR WEAPONS...

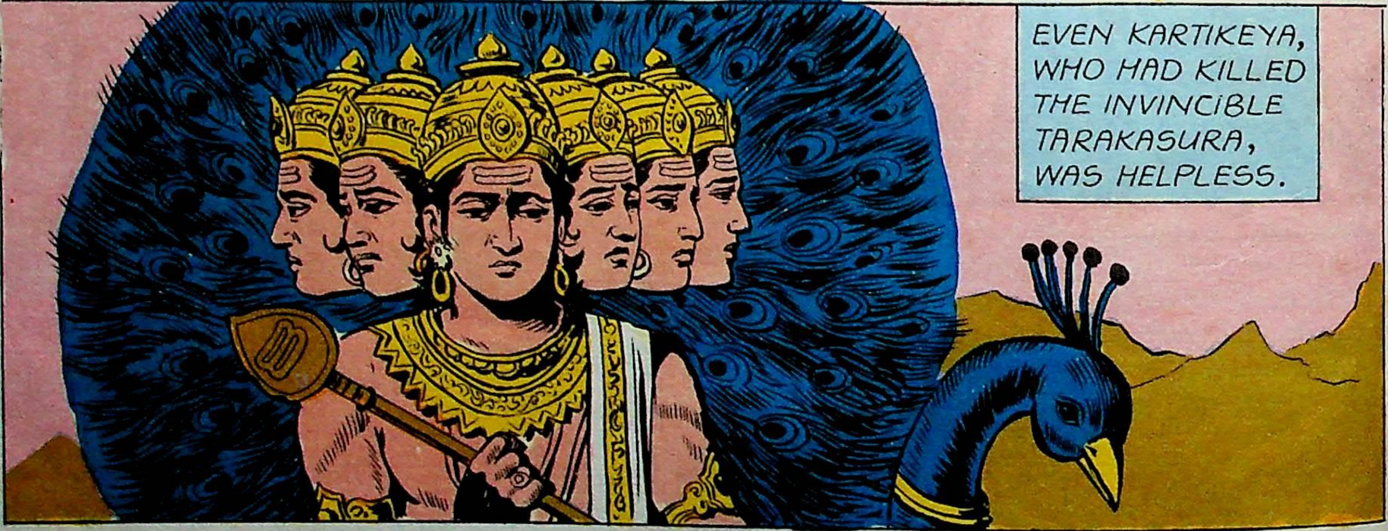


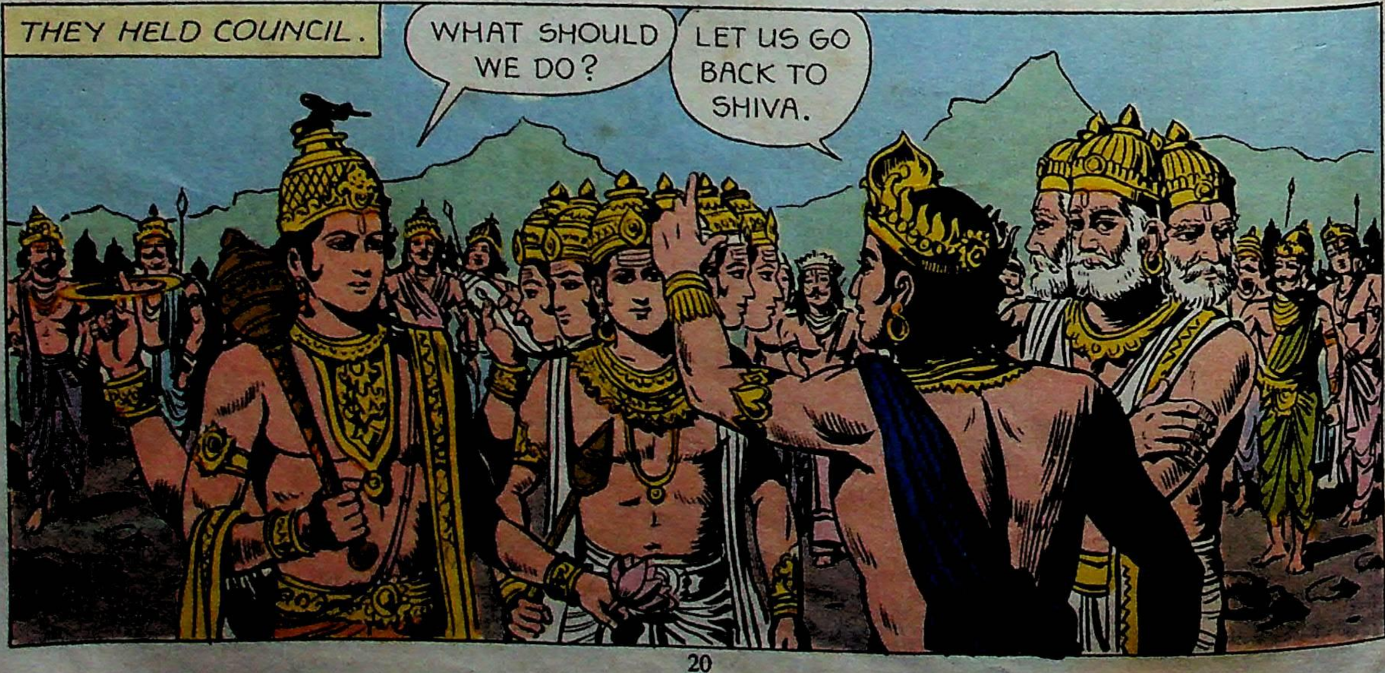
...AND HURLED THEM BACK.

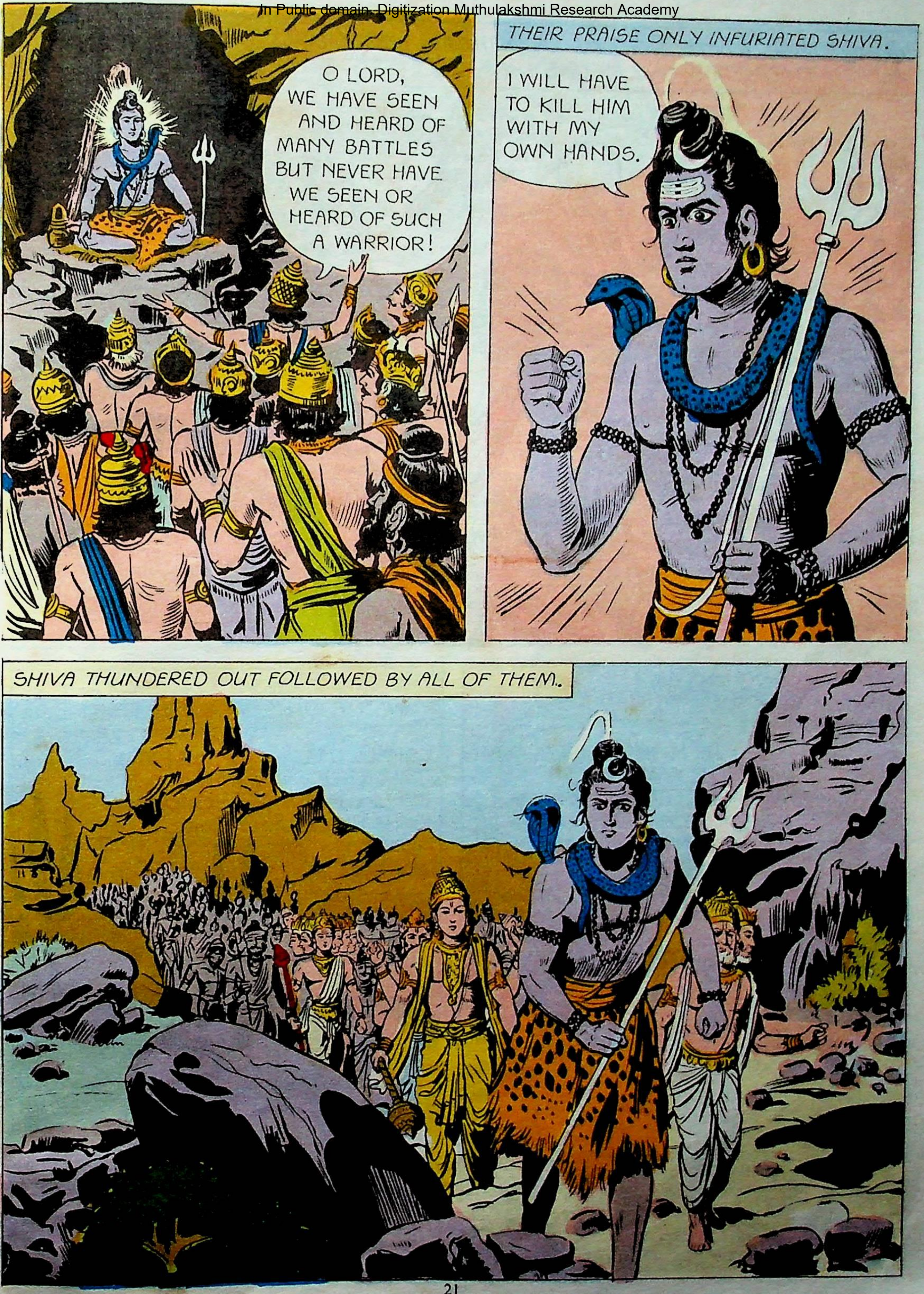


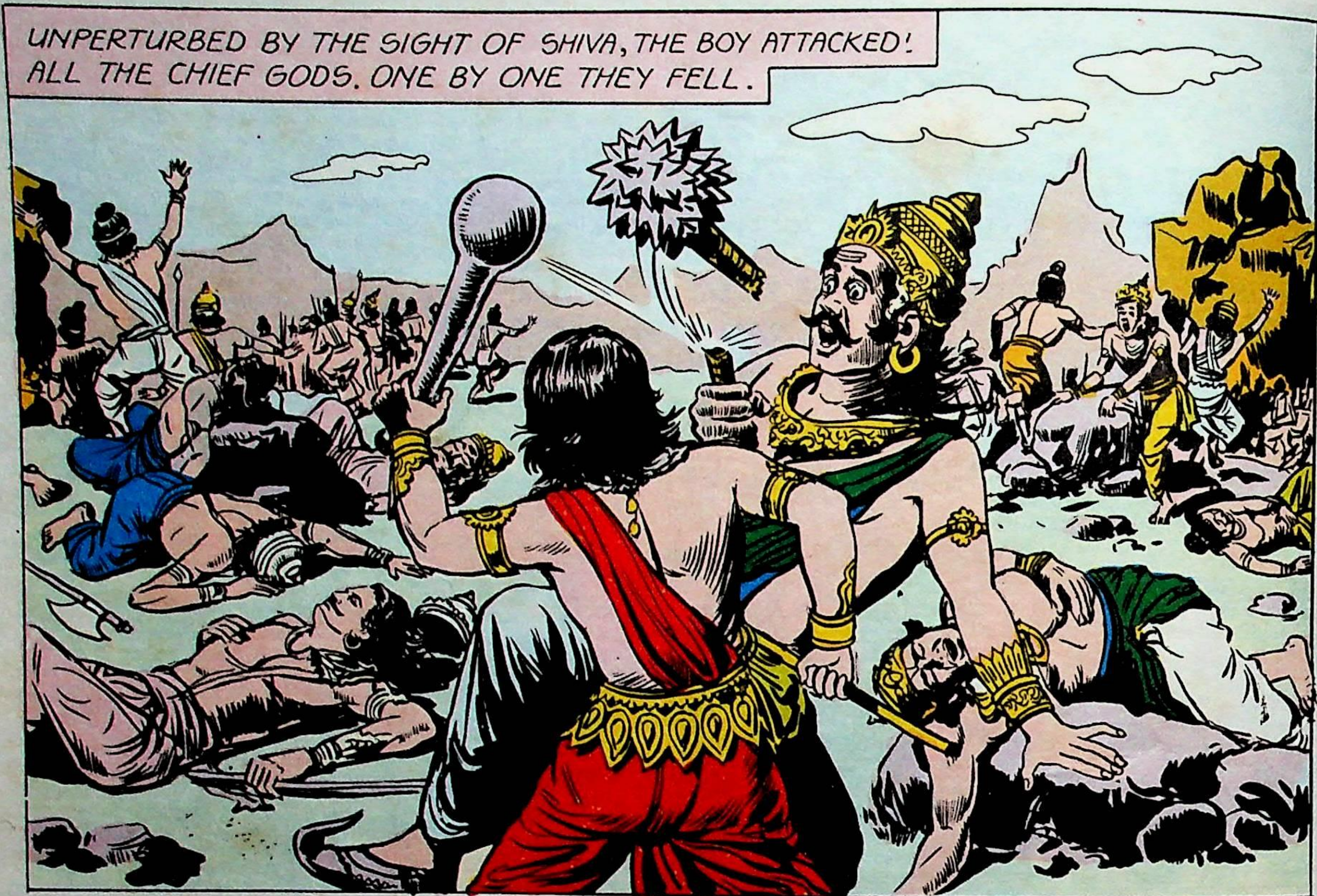

DURGA TOOK THE FORM OF LIGHTNING...
...AND DESTROYED THE ENEMIES' WEAPONS BEFORE THEY COULD REACH THE BOY.
BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM THEY DID NOT LET A SINGLE WEAPON COME ANYWHERE NEAR THE BOY'S SWINGING CLUB.

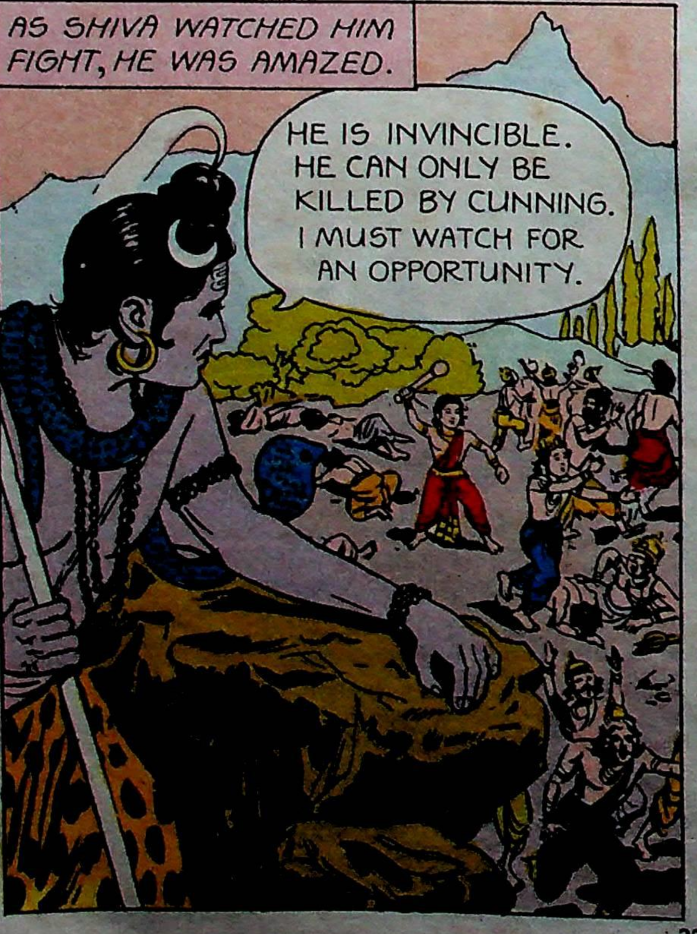

INDRA AND HIS DEVAS WERE COMPLETELY ROUTED.

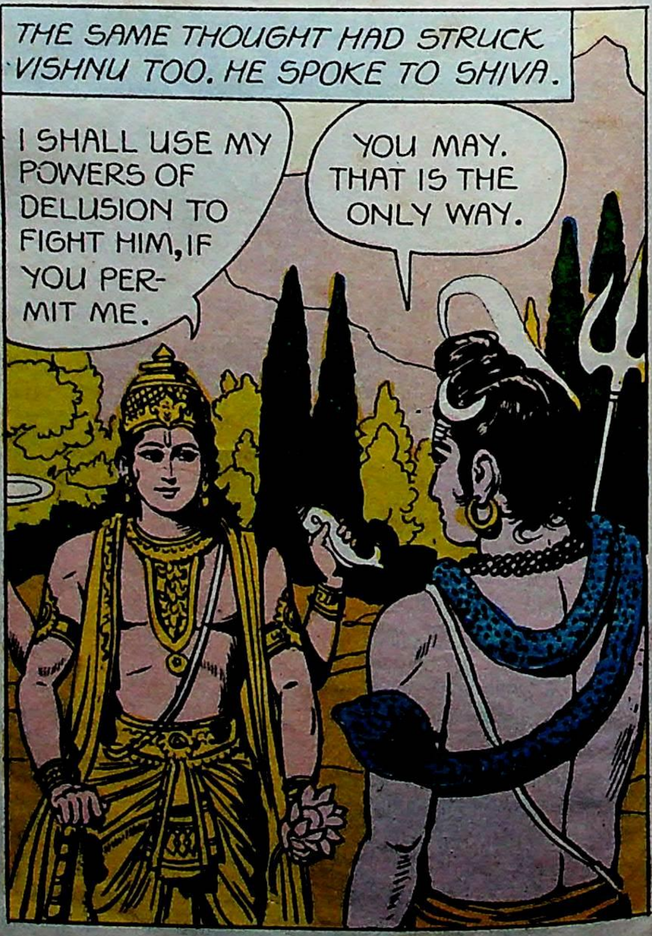

EVEN KARTIKEYA, WHO HAD KILLED THE INVINCIBLE TARAKASURA, WAS HELPLESS.

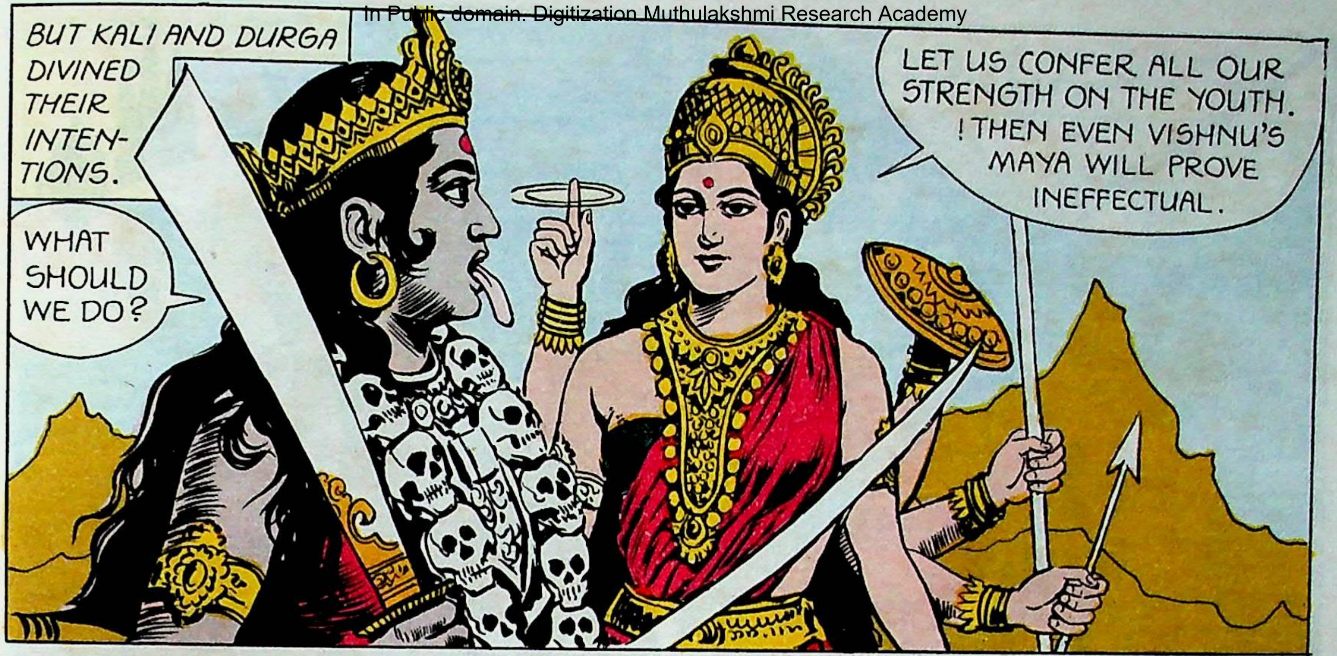

THEY HELD COUNCIL.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
LET US GO BACK TO SHIVA.

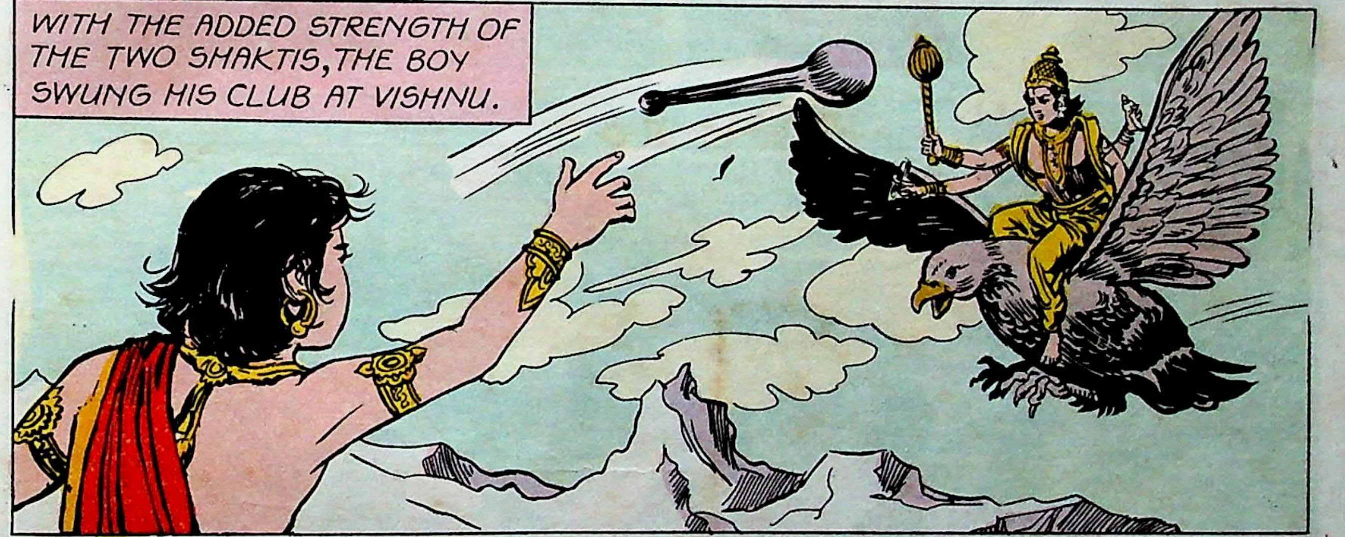

O LORD, WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD OF MANY BATTLES BUT NEVER HAVE WE SEEN OR HEARD OF SUCH A WARRIOR!
THEIR PRAISE ONLY INFURIATED SHIVA.
I WILL HAVE TO KILL HIM WITH MY OWN HANDS.
SHIVA THUNDERED OUT FOLLOWED BY ALL OF THEM..

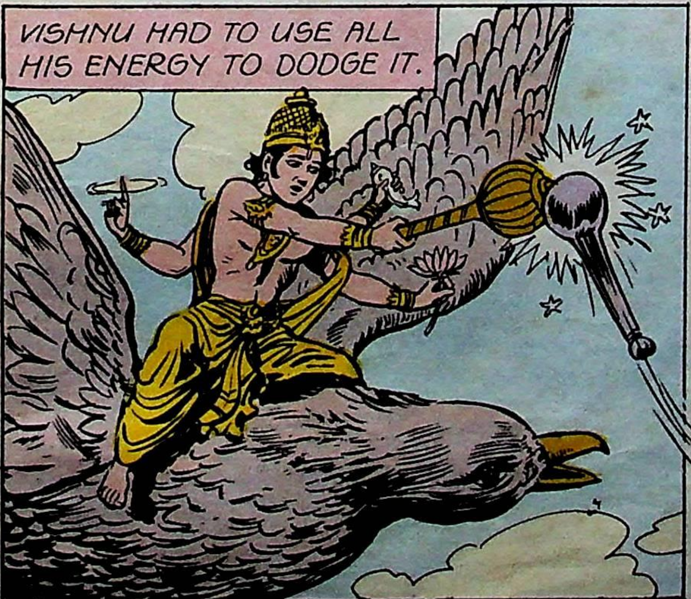

UNPERTURBED BY THE SIGHT OF SHIVA, THE BOY ATTACKED! ALL THE CHIEF GODS. ONE BY ONE THEY FELL.

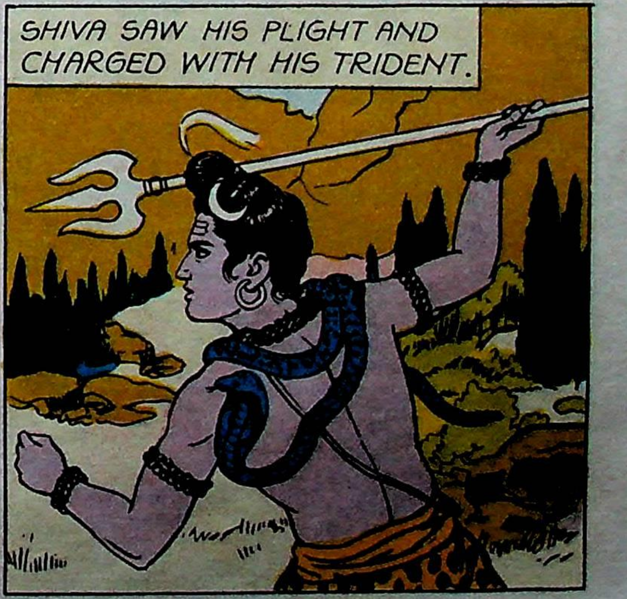

AS SHIVA WATCHED HIM FIGHT, HE WAS AMAZED.
HE IS INVINCIBLE. HE CAN ONLY BE KILLED BY CUNNING. I MUST WATCH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY.

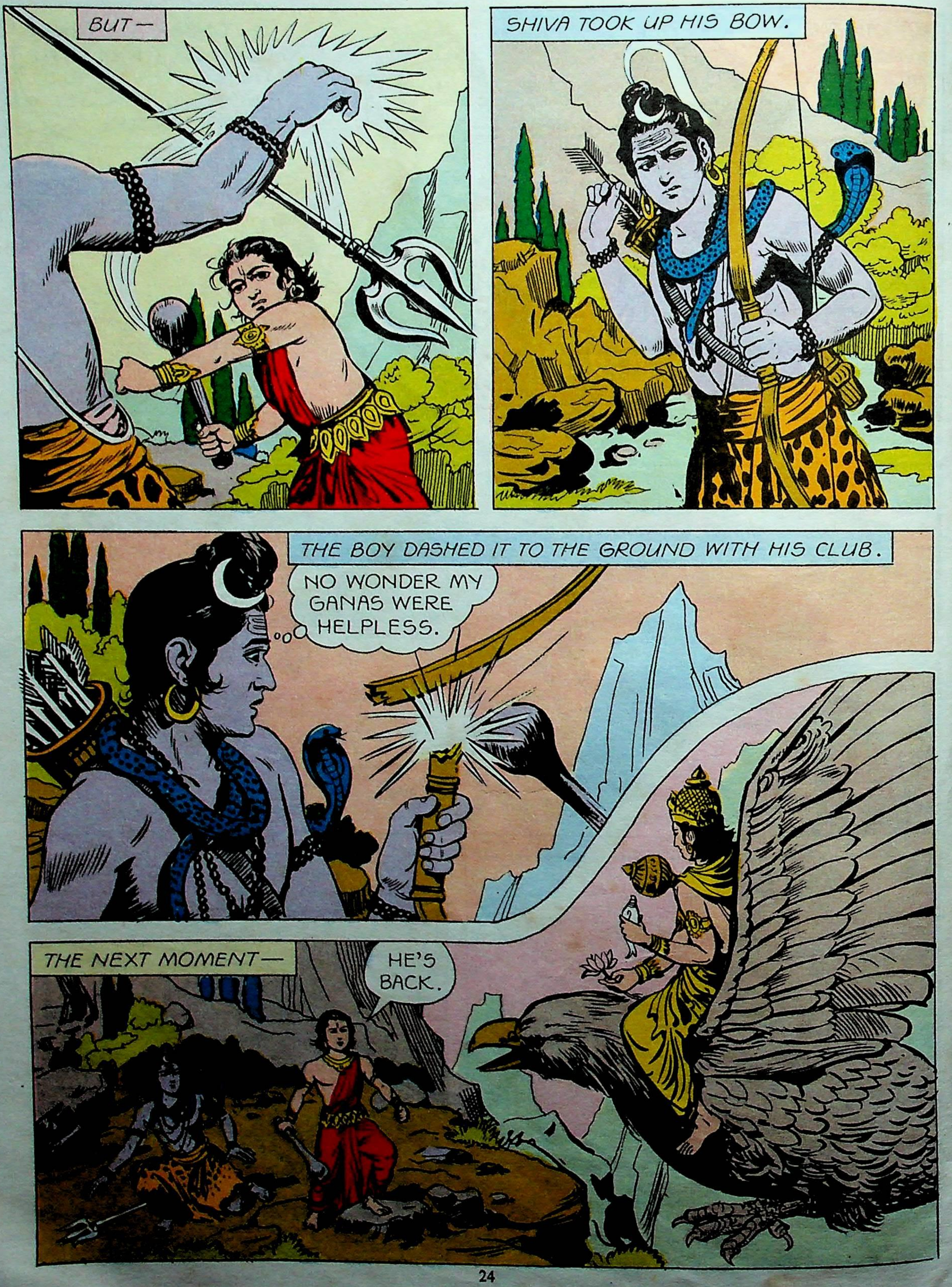

THE SAME THOUGHT HAD STRUCK VISHNU TOO. HE SPOKE TO SHIVA.
I SHALL USE MY POWERS OF DELUSION TO FIGHT HIM, IF YOU PERMIT ME.
YOU MAY. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY.

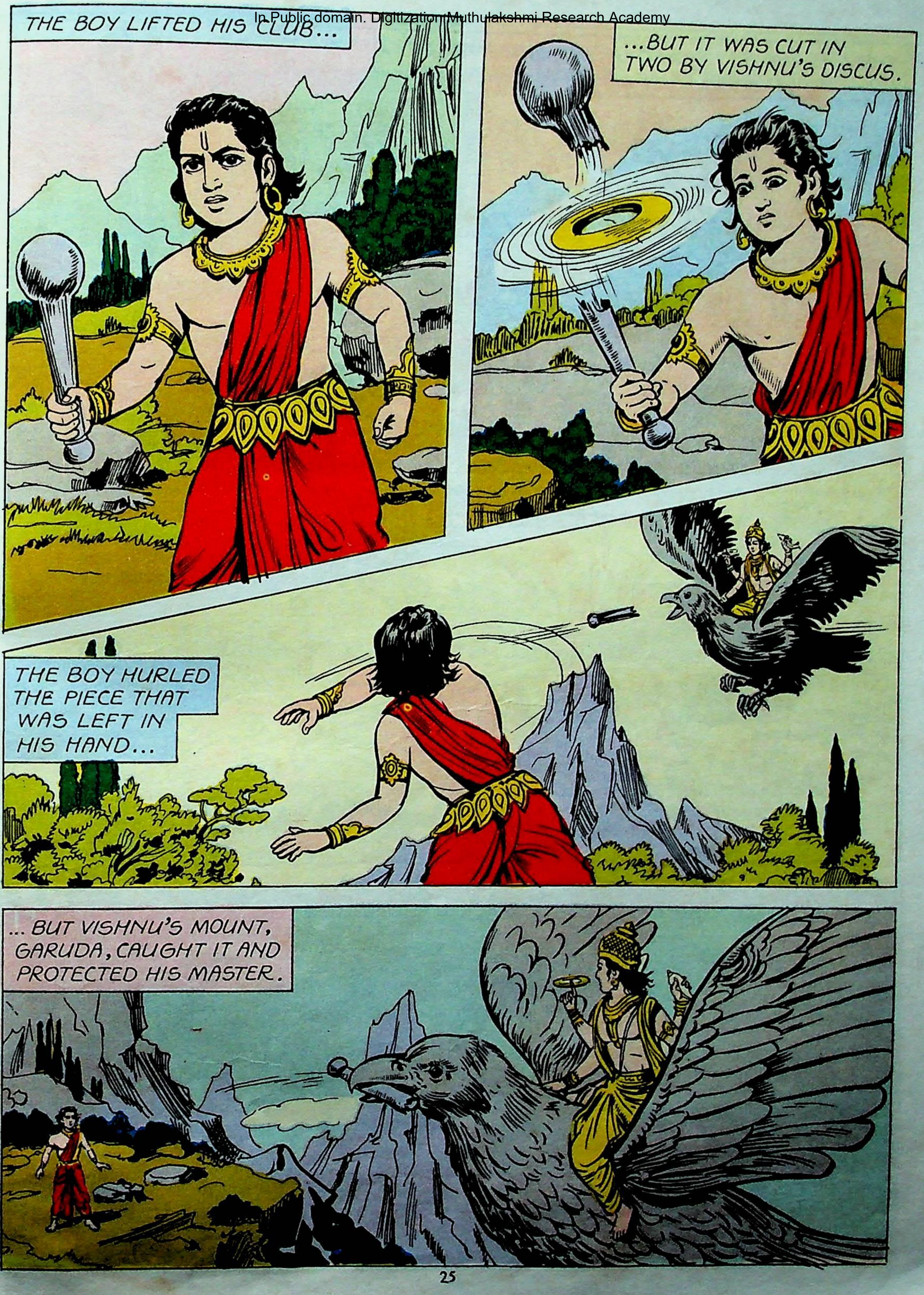

BUT KALI AND DURGA DIVINED THEIR INTENTIONS.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
LET US CONFER ALL OUR STRENGTH ON THE YOUTH. THEN EVEN VISHNU'S MAYA WILL PROVE INEFFECTUAL.

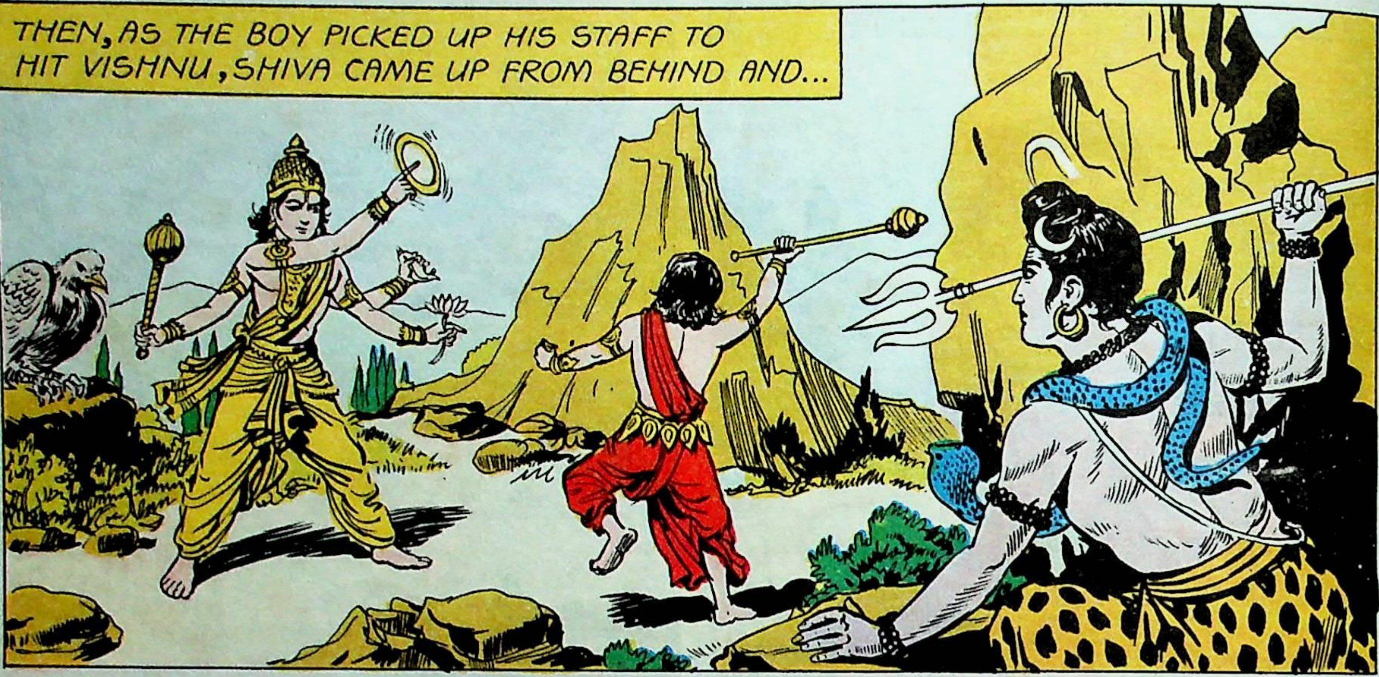

WITH THE ADDED STRENGTH OF THE TWO SHAKTIS, THE BOY SWUNG HIS CLUB AT VISHNU.

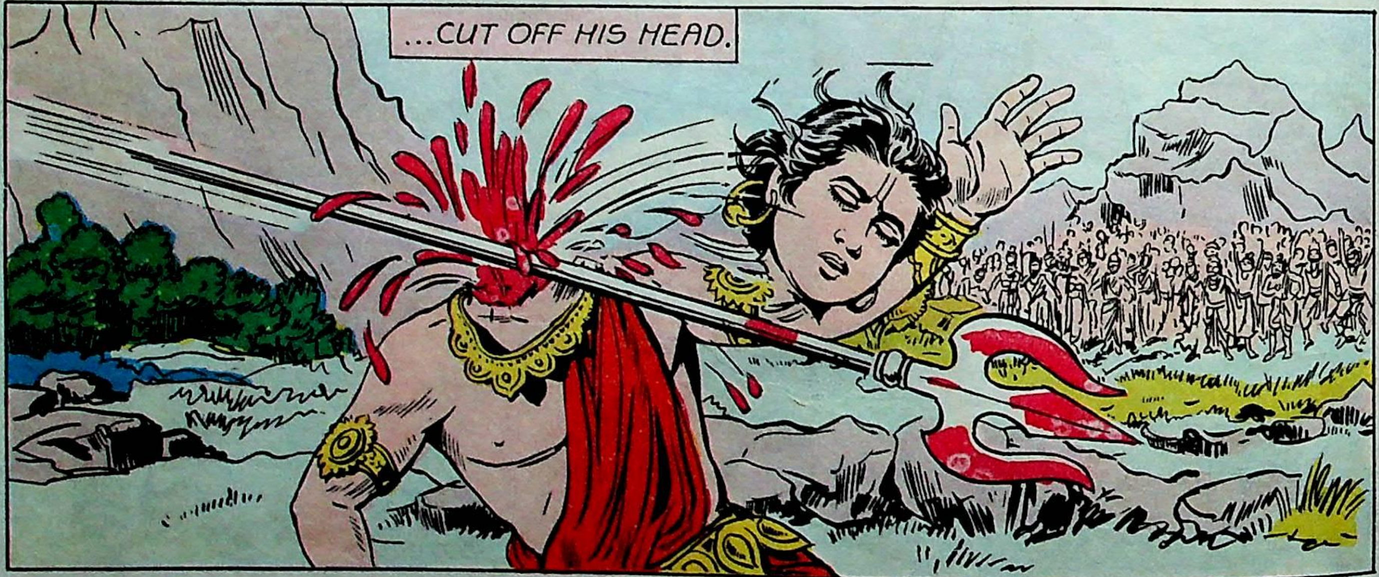

VISHNU HAD TO USE ALL HIS ENERGY TO DODGE IT.

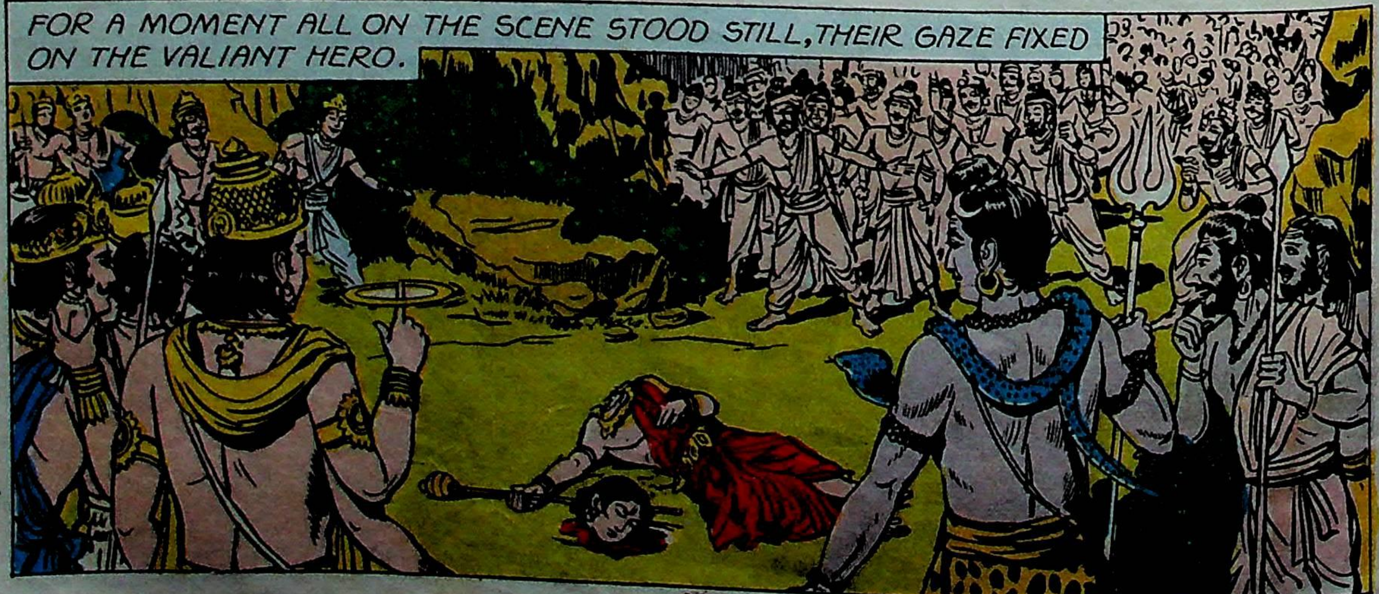

SHIVA SAW HIS PLIGHT AND CHARGED WITH HIS TRIDENT.

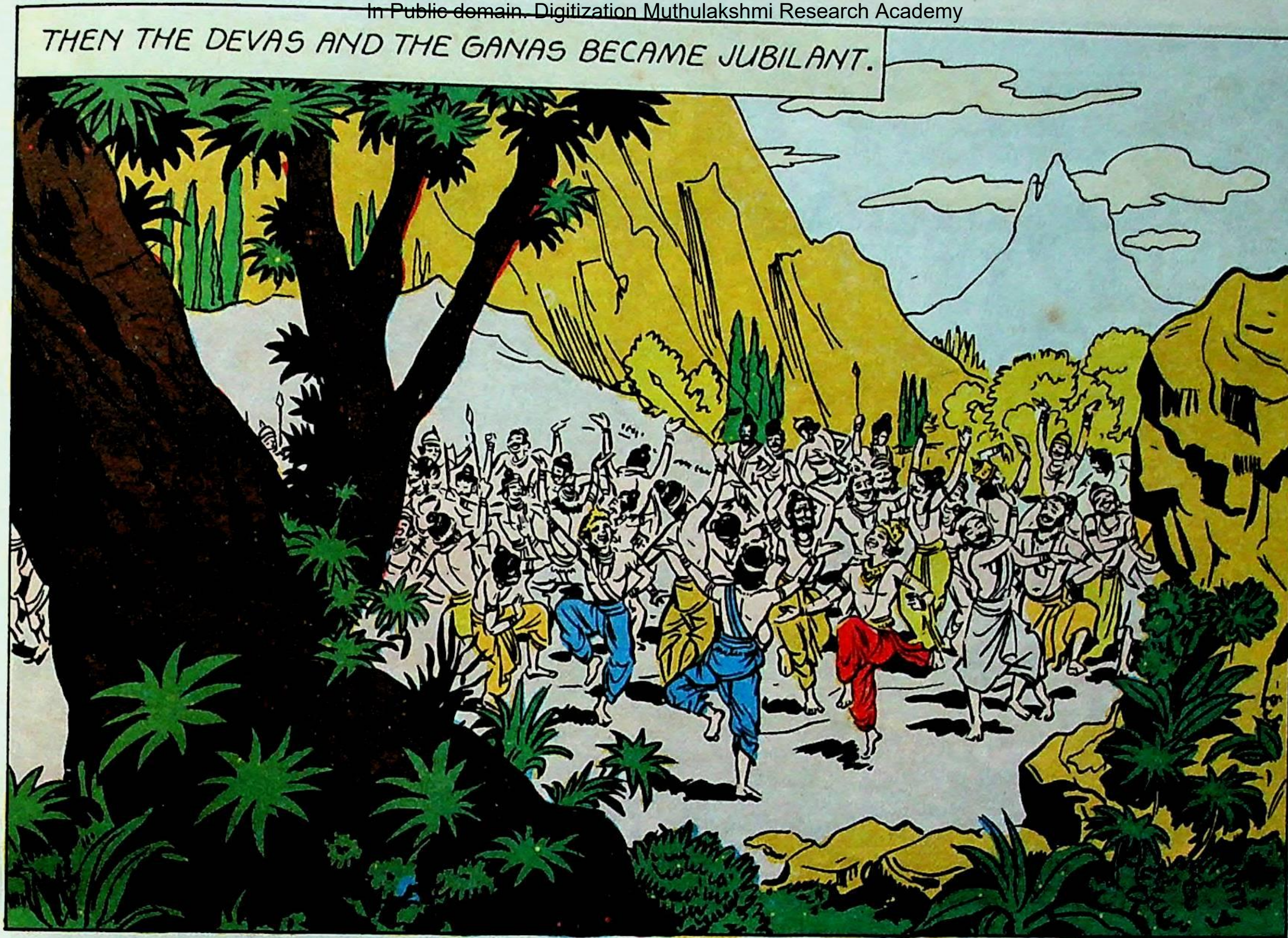

BUT—
SHIVA TOOK UP HIS BOW.
THE BOY DASHED IT TO THE GROUND WITH HIS CLUB.
NO WONDER MY GANAS WERE HELPLESS.
THE NEXT MOMENT—
HE'S BACK.

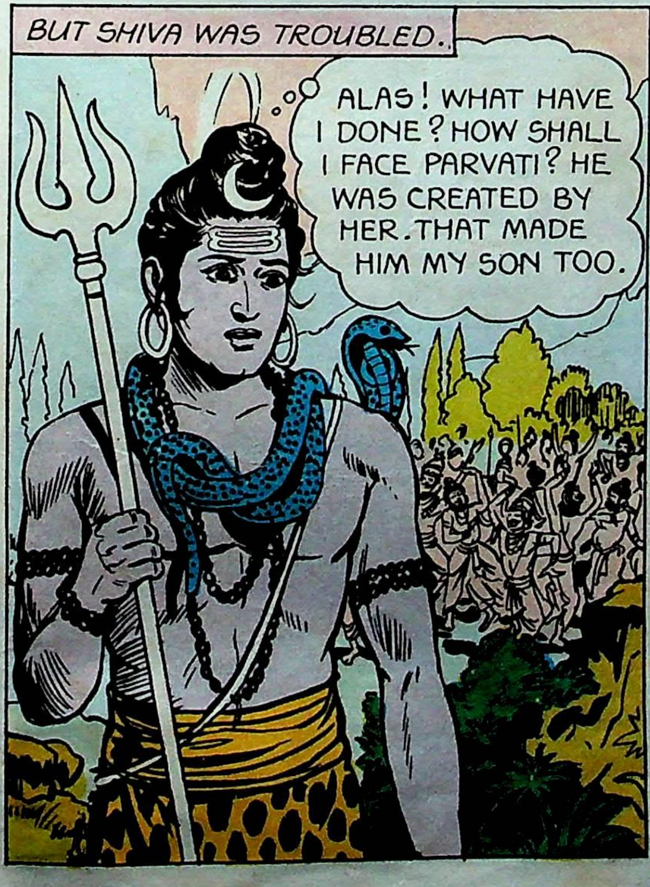

THE BOY LIFTED HIS CLUB...
...BUT IT WAS CUT IN TWO BY VISHNU'S DISCUS.
THE BOY HURLED THE PIECE THAT WAS LEFT IN HIS HAND...
...BUT VISHNU'S MOUNT, GARUDA, CAUGHT IT AND PROTECTED HIS MASTER.

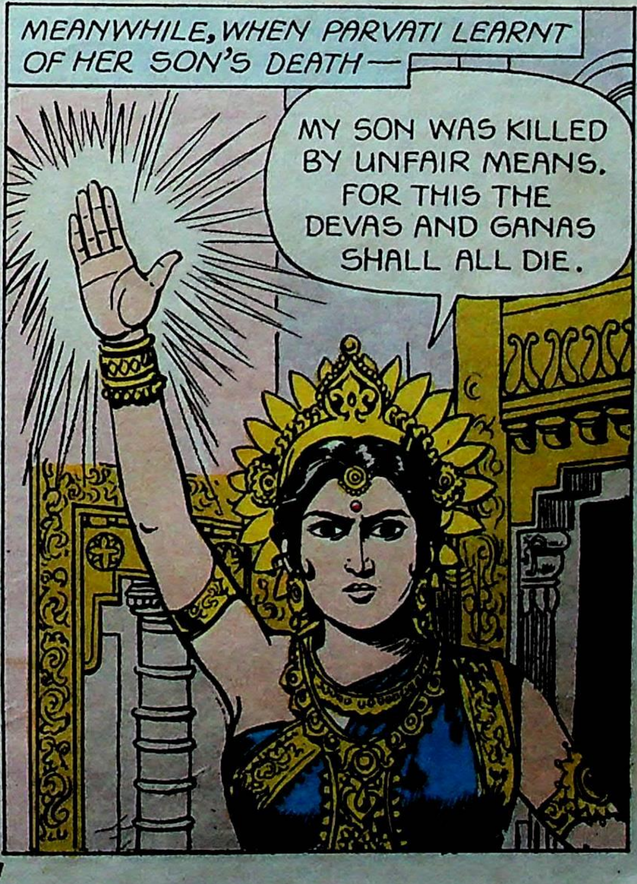

THEN, AS THE BOY PICKED UP HIS STAFF TO HIT VISHNU, SHIVA CAME UP FROM BEHIND AND...

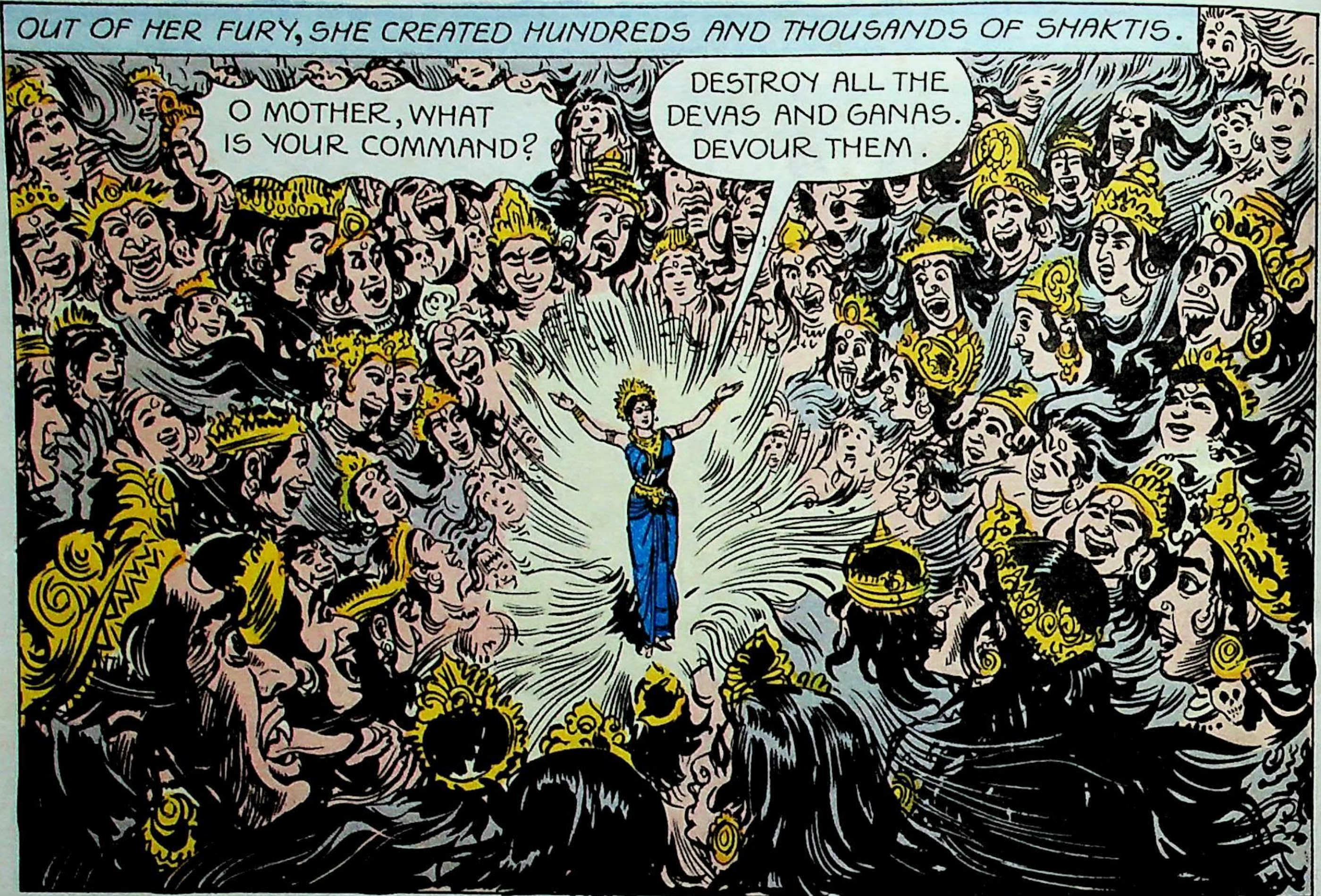

...CUT OFF HIS HEAD.

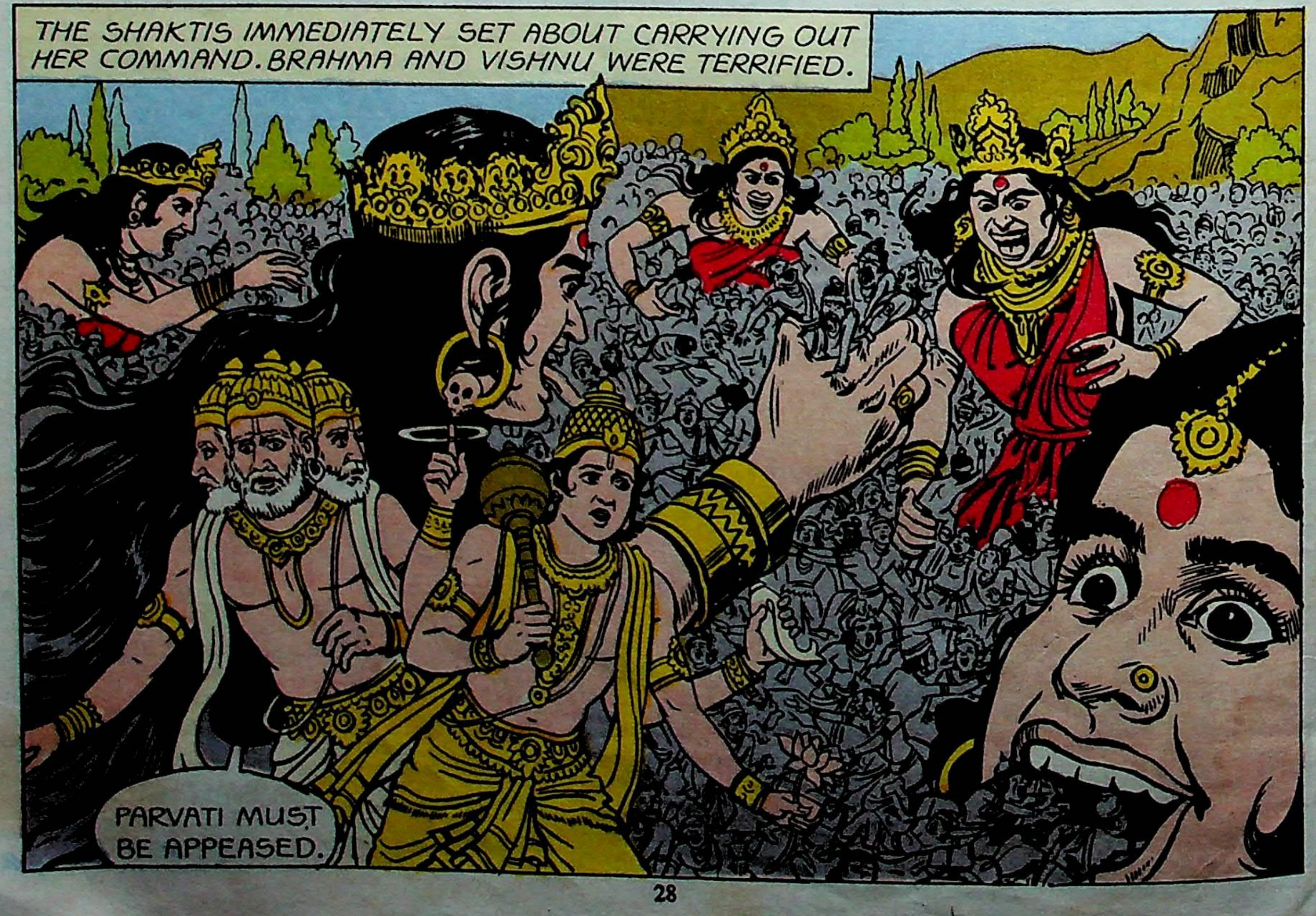

FOR A MOMENT ALL ON THE SCENE STOOD STILL, THEIR GAZE FIXED ON THE VALIANT HERO.


THEN THE DEVAS AND THE GANAS BECAME JUBILANT.

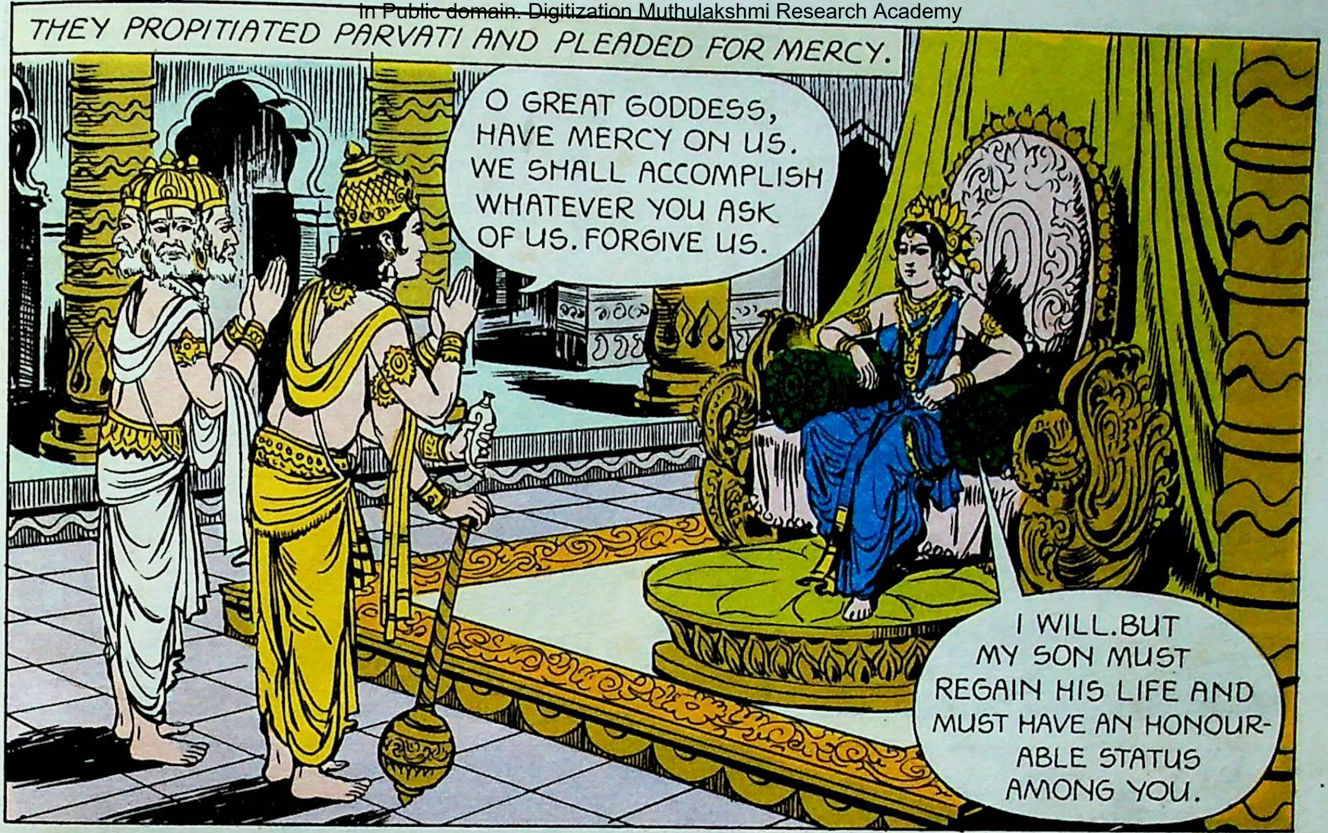

BUT SHIVA WAS TROUBLED.
ALAS! WHAT HAVE I DONE? HOW SHALL I FACE PARVATI? HE WAS CREATED BY HER. THAT MADE HIM MY SON TOO.


MEANWHILE, WHEN PARVATI LEARNT OF HER SON'S DEATH —
MY SON WAS KILLED BY UNFAIR MEANS. FOR THIS THE DEVAS AND GANAS SHALL ALL DIE.

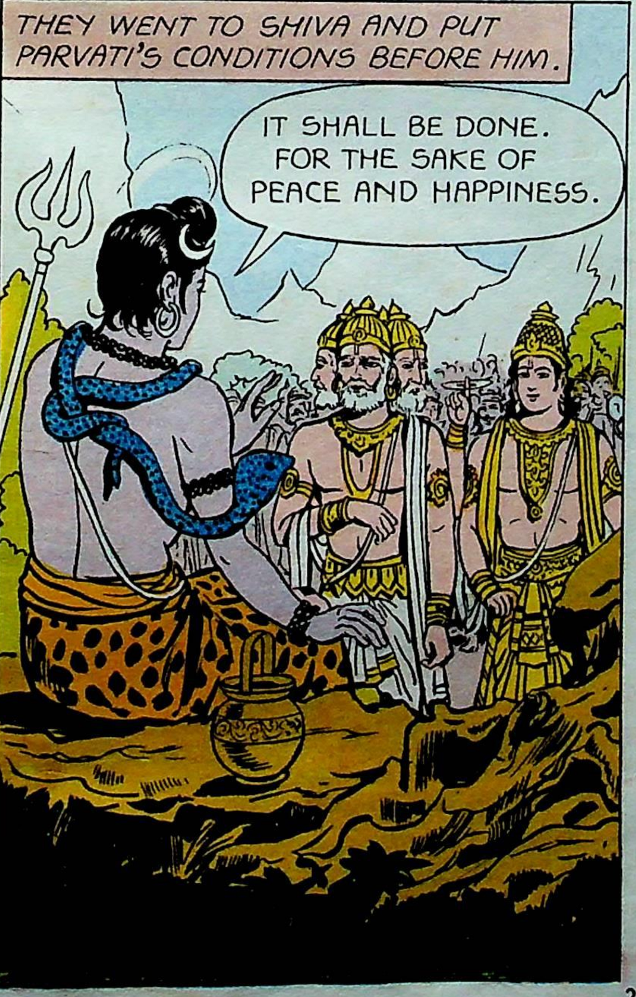

OUT OF HER FURY, SHE CREATED HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF SHAKTIS.
O MOTHER, WHAT IS YOUR COMMAND?
DESTROY ALL THE DEVAS AND GANAS. DEVOUR THEM.

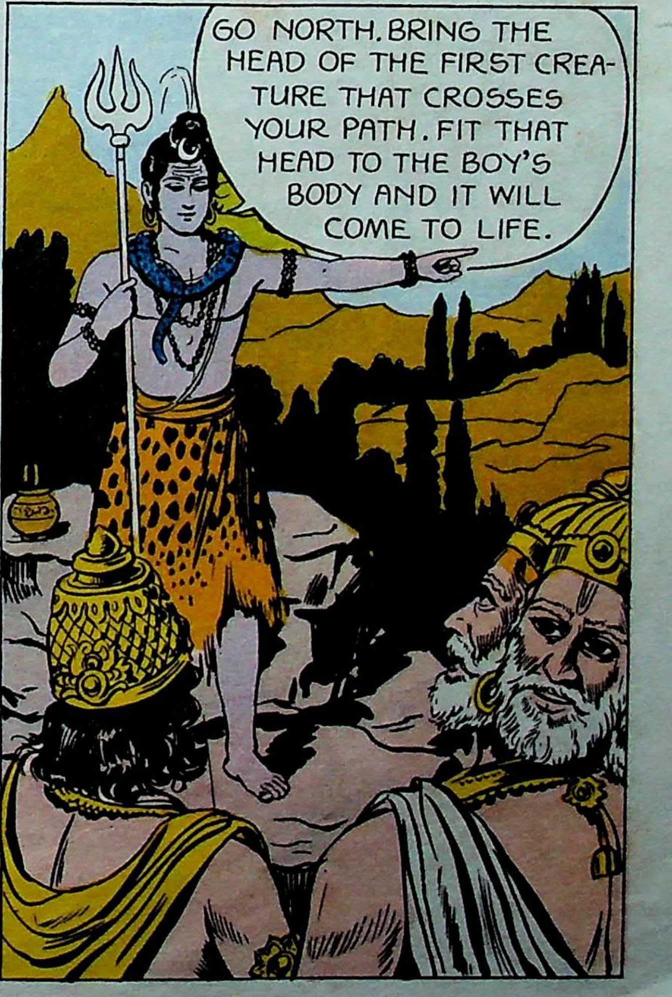

THE SHAKTIS IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT CARRYING OUT HER COMMAND. BRAHMA AND VISHNU WERE TERRIFIED.
PARVATI MUST BE APPEASED.

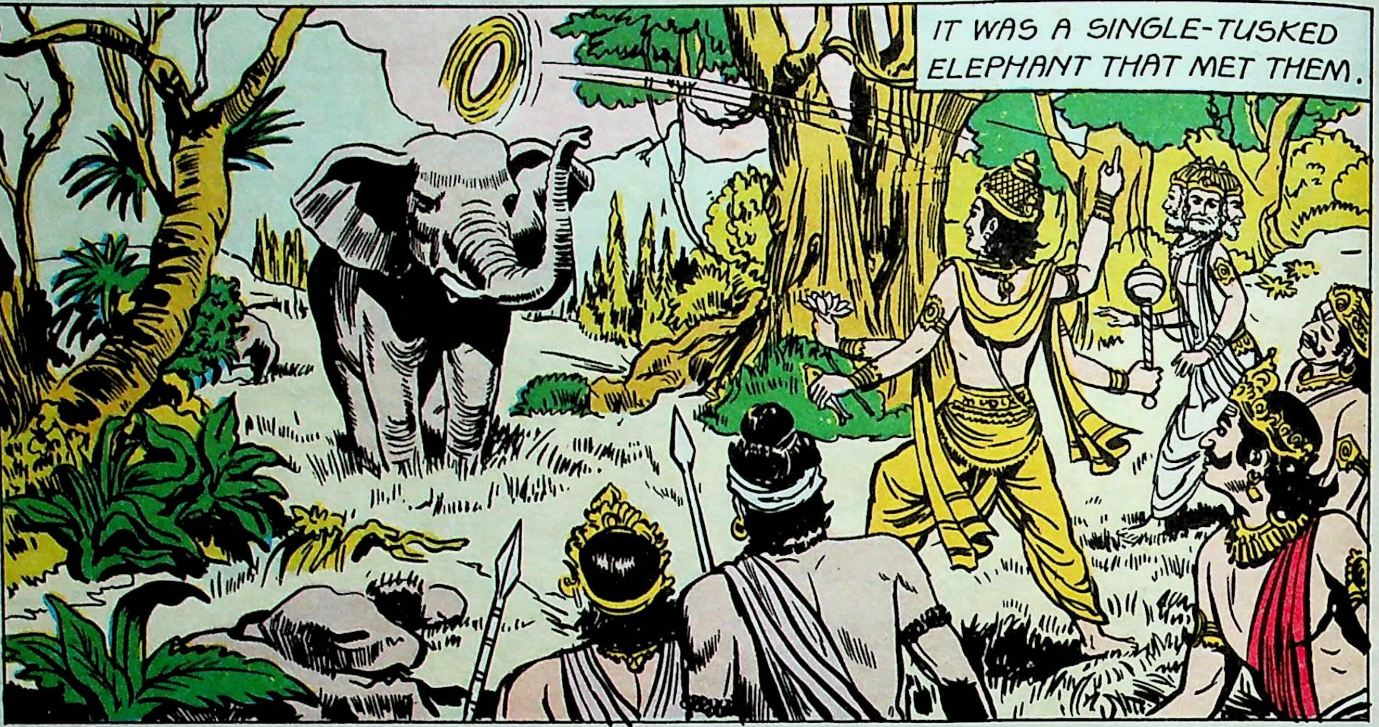
THEY PROPITIATED PARVATI AND PLEADED FOR MERCY.


O GREAT GODDESS, HAVE MERCY ON US. WE SHALL ACCOMPLISH WHATEVER YOU ASK OF US. FORGIVE US.
I WILL. BUT MY SON MUST REGAIN HIS LIFE AND MUST HAVE AN HONOURABLE STATUS AMONG YOU.

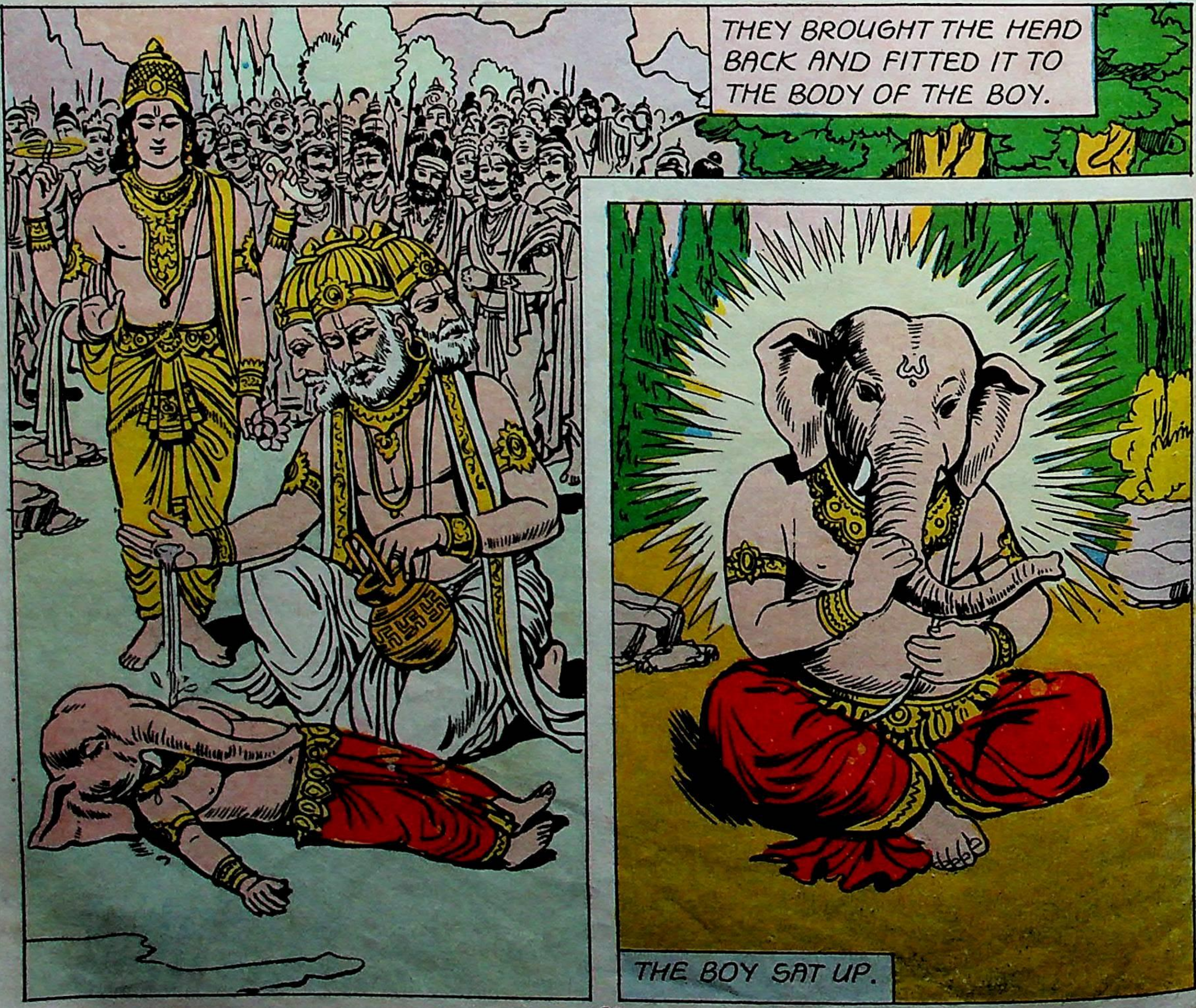
THEY WENT TO SHIVA AND PUT PARVATI'S CONDITIONS BEFORE HIM.


IT SHALL BE DONE. FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS.


GO NORTH. BRING THE HEAD OF THE FIRST CREATURE THAT CROSSES YOUR PATH. FIT THAT HEAD TO THE BOY'S BODY AND IT WILL COME TO LIFE.

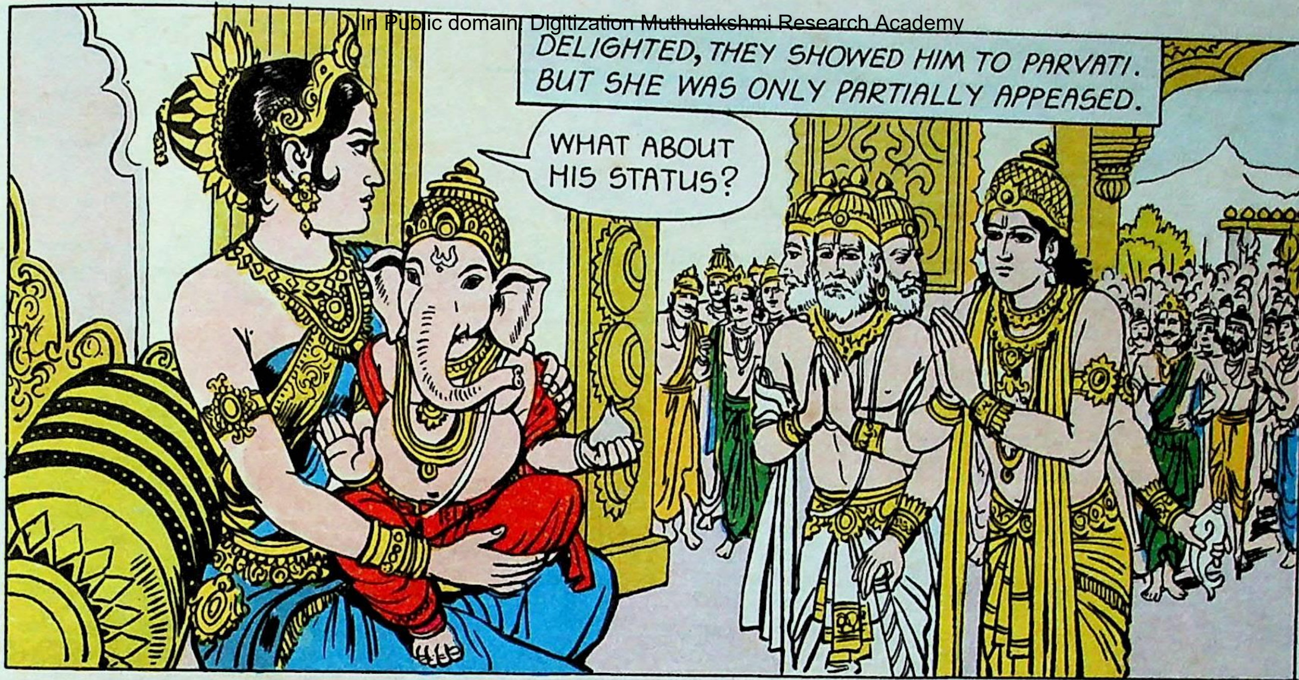


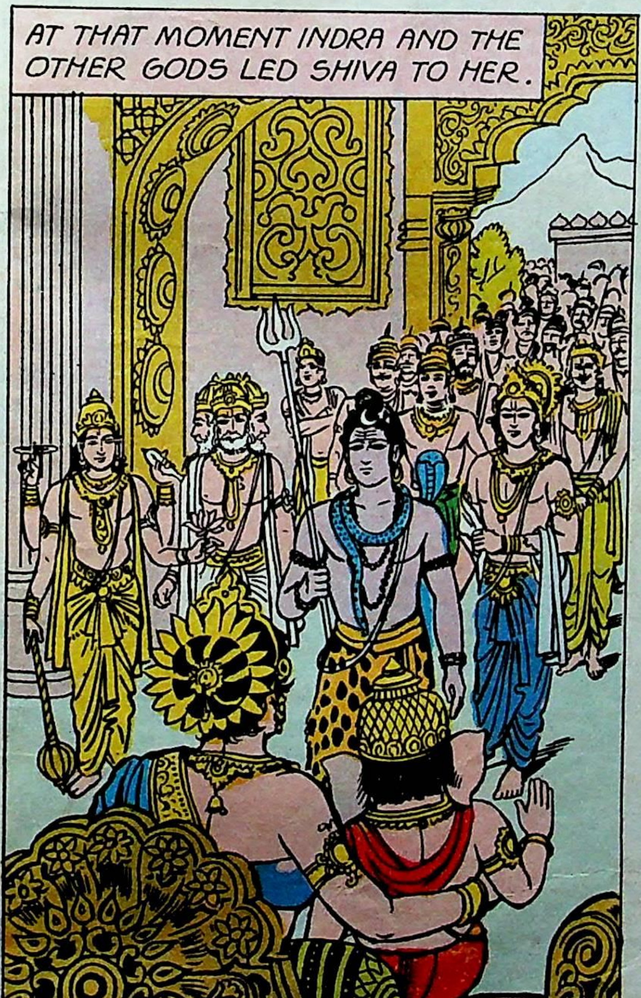
IT WAS A SINGLE-TUSKED ELEPHANT THAT MET THEM.

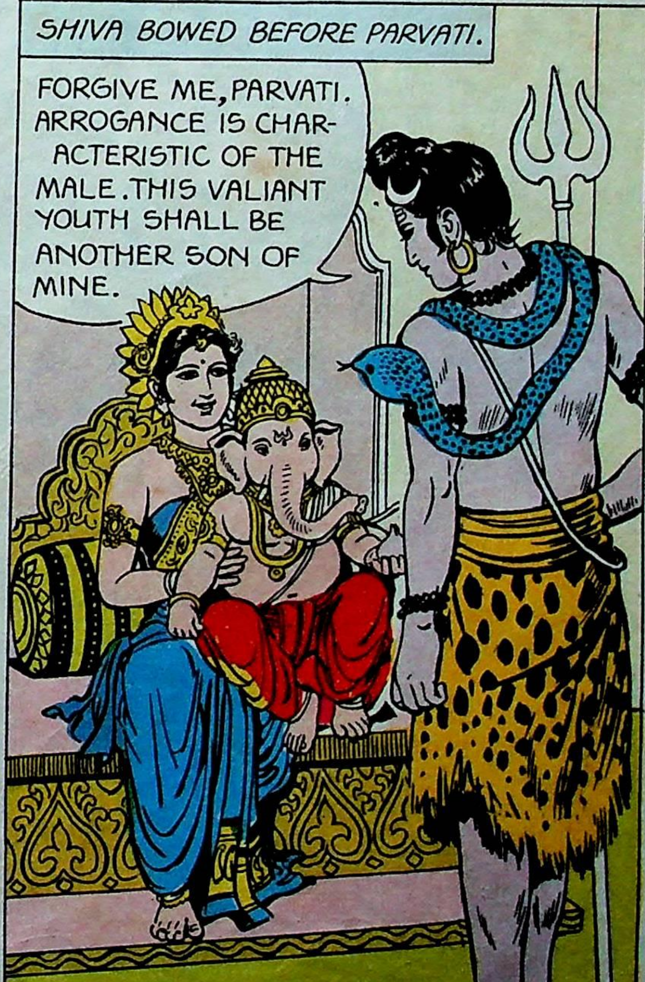


THEY BROUGHT THE HEAD BACK AND FITTED IT TO THE BODY OF THE BOY.

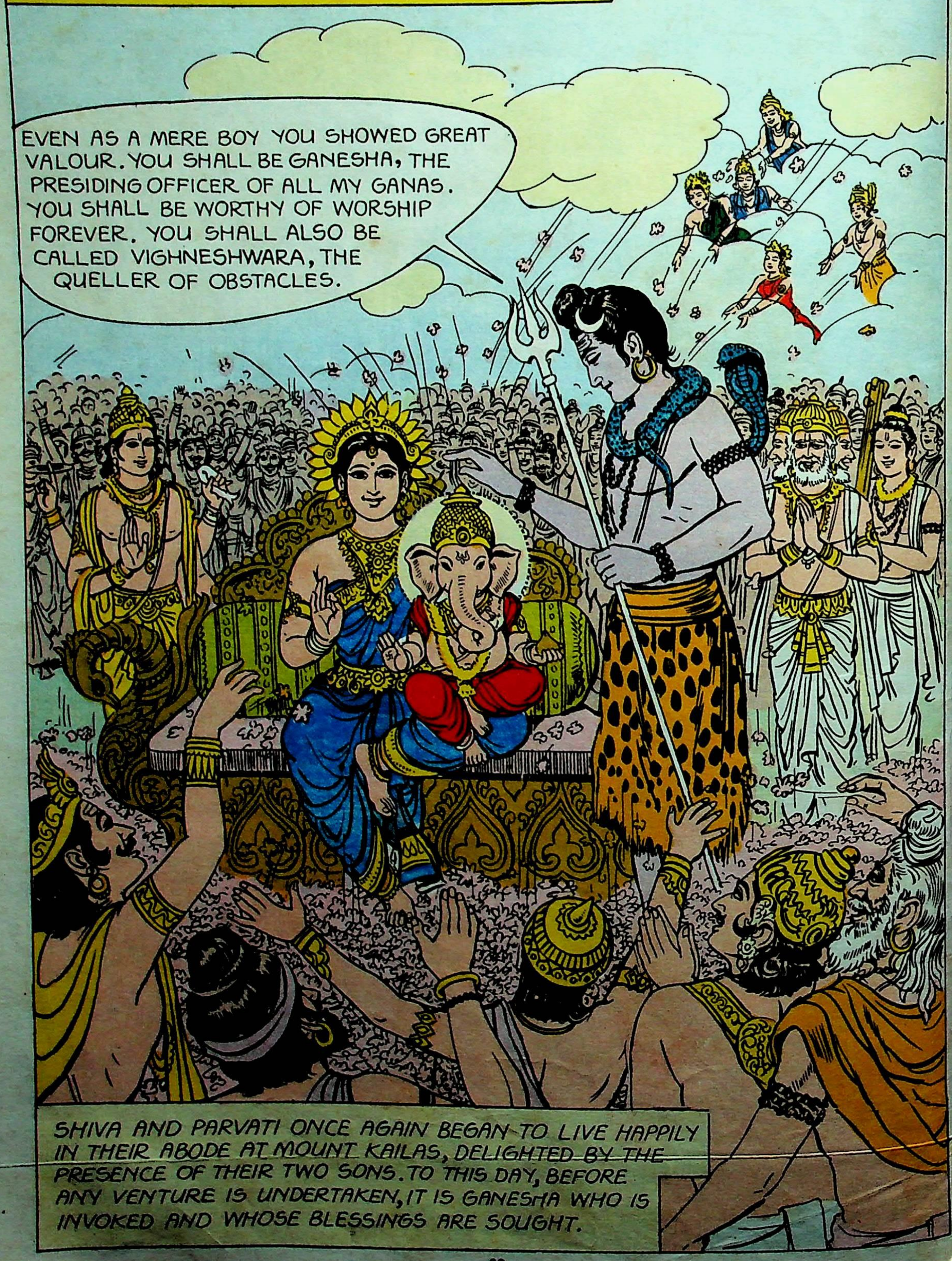
THE BOY SAT UP.


DELIGHTED, THEY SHOWED HIM TO PARVATI. BUT SHE WAS ONLY PARTIALLY APPEASED.
WHAT ABOUT HIS STATUS?


AT THAT MOMENT INDRA AND THE OTHER GODS LED SHIVA TO HER.


SHIVA BOWED BEFORE PARVATI.
FORGIVE ME, PARVATI. ARROGANCE IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MALE. THIS VALIANT YOUTH SHALL BE ANOTHER SON OF MINE.

THEN SHIVA PLACED HIS HAND ON THE BOY'S HEAD.


EVEN AS A MERE BOY YOU SHOWED GREAT VALOUR. YOU SHALL BE GANESHA, THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF ALL MY GANAS. YOU SHALL BE WORTHY OF WORSHIP FOREVER. YOU SHALL ALSO BE CALLED VIGHNESHWARA, THE QUELLER OF OBSTACLES.

SHIVA AND PARVATI ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TO LIVE HAPPILY IN THEIR ABODE AT MOUNT KAILAS, DELIGHTED BY THE PRESENCE OF THEIR TWO SONS. TO THIS DAY, BEFORE ANY VENTURE IS UNDERTAKEN, IT IS GANESHA WHO IS INVOKED AND WHOSE BLESSINGS ARE SOUGHT.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

RAMA

RETOLD FROM THE RAMAYANA

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AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

The route to your roots

RAMA

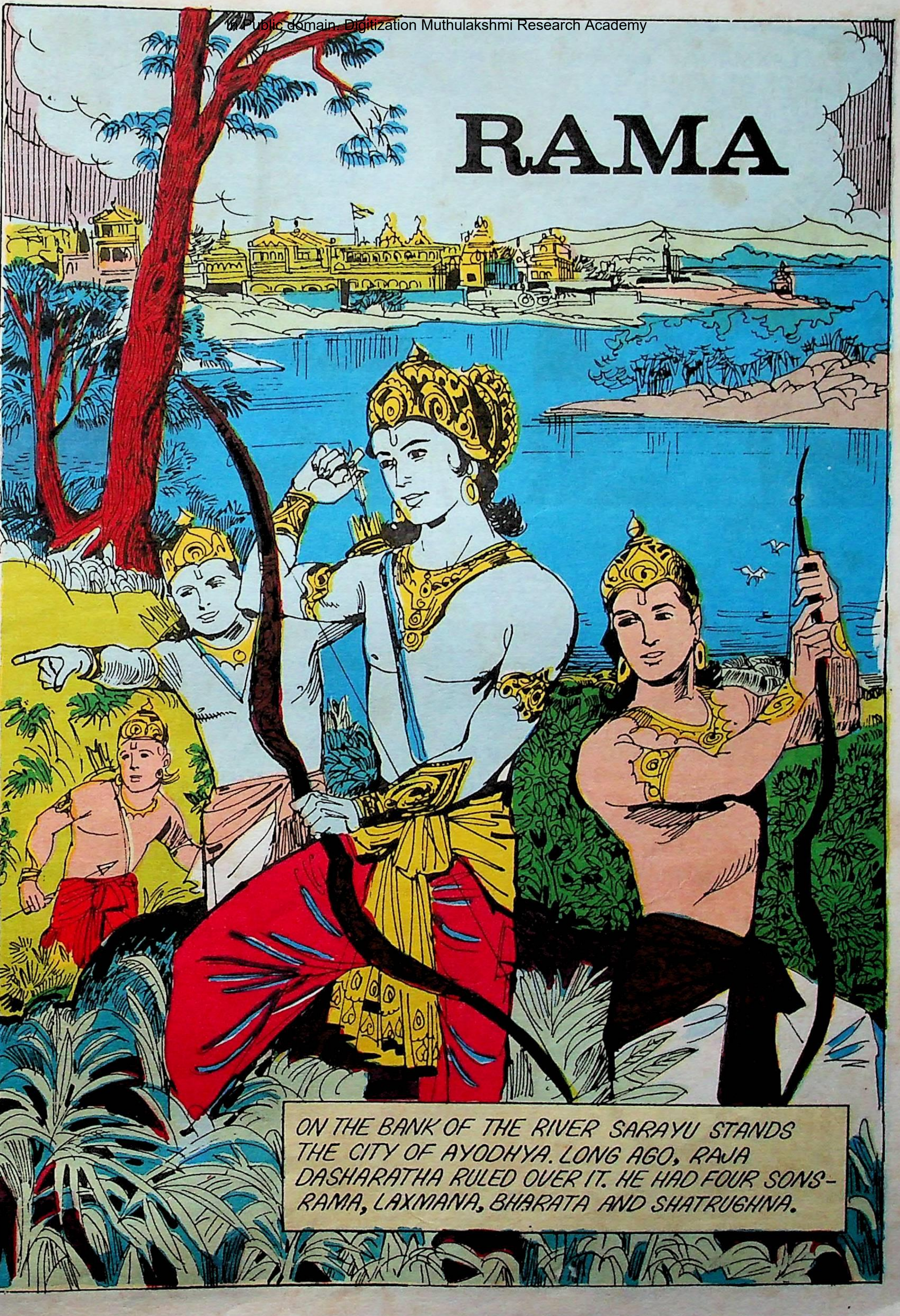
Rama was happy living in the forest with his wife and brother. Palace intrigue may have forced his exile, but the next fourteen years promised to be quite pleasant. Suddenly, this idyllic life was thrown into turmoil. His beloved wife Sita was kidnapped! With unmatched skill as a warrior, Rama destroyed the ten-headed Ravana. And along the way, he won a host of very grateful friends.

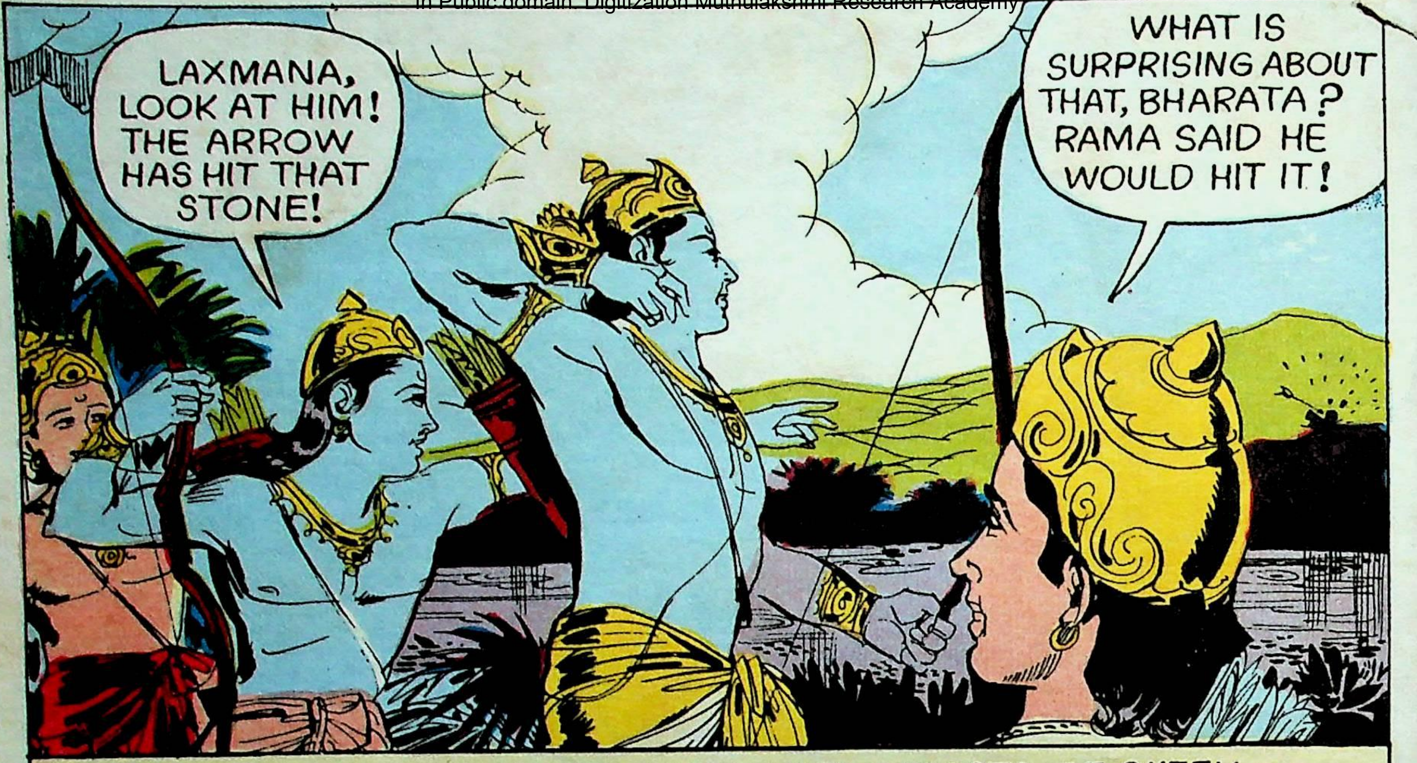
Script
Anant Pai

Illustrations
Ram Waeerkar

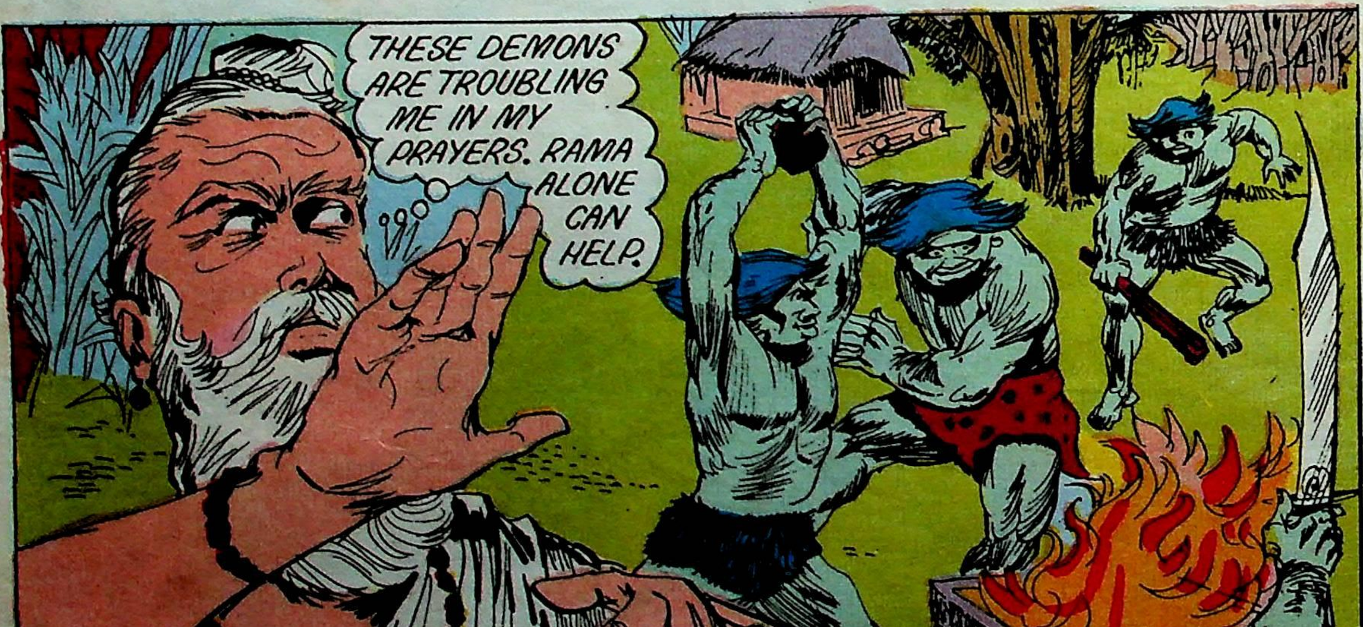
Editor
Anant Pai

RAMA

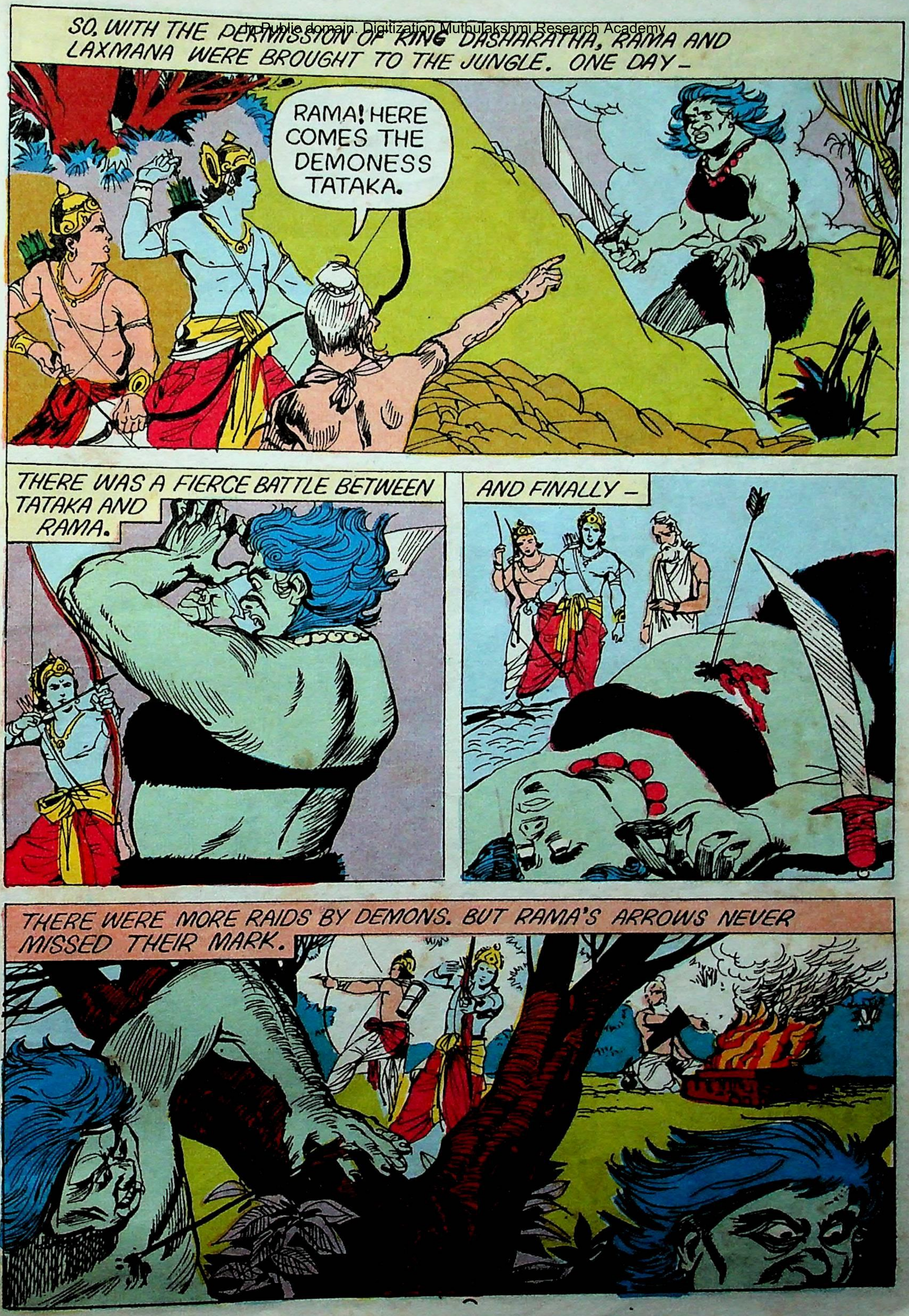

ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER SARAYU STANDS THE CITY OF AYODHYA. LONG AGO, RAJA DASHARATHA RULED OVER IT. HE HAD FOUR SONS- RAMA, LAXMANA, BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA.

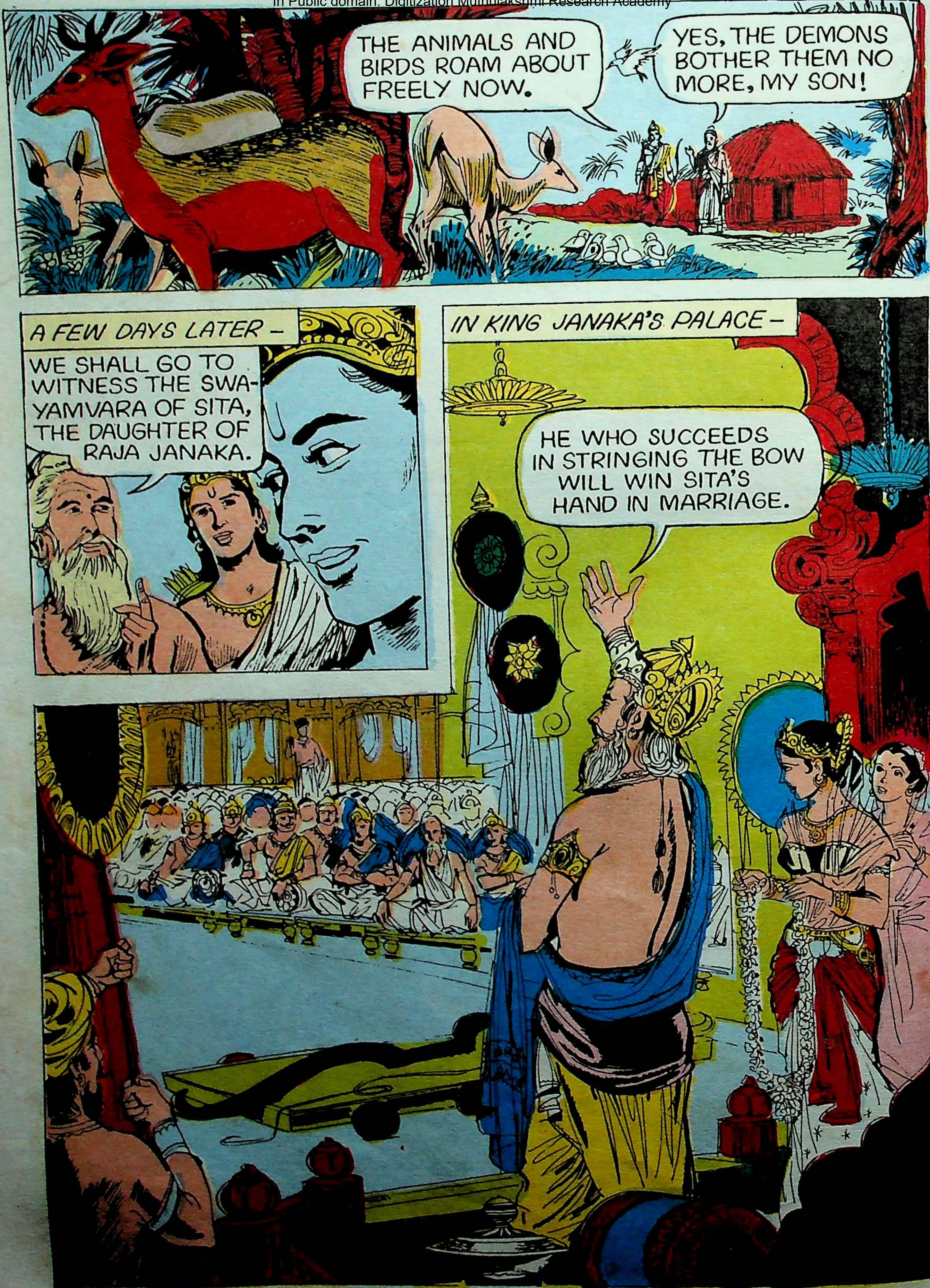

LAXMANA, LOOK AT HIM! THE ARROW HAS HIT THAT STONE!
WHAT IS SURPRISING ABOUT THAT, BHARATA? RAMA SAID HE WOULD HIT IT!

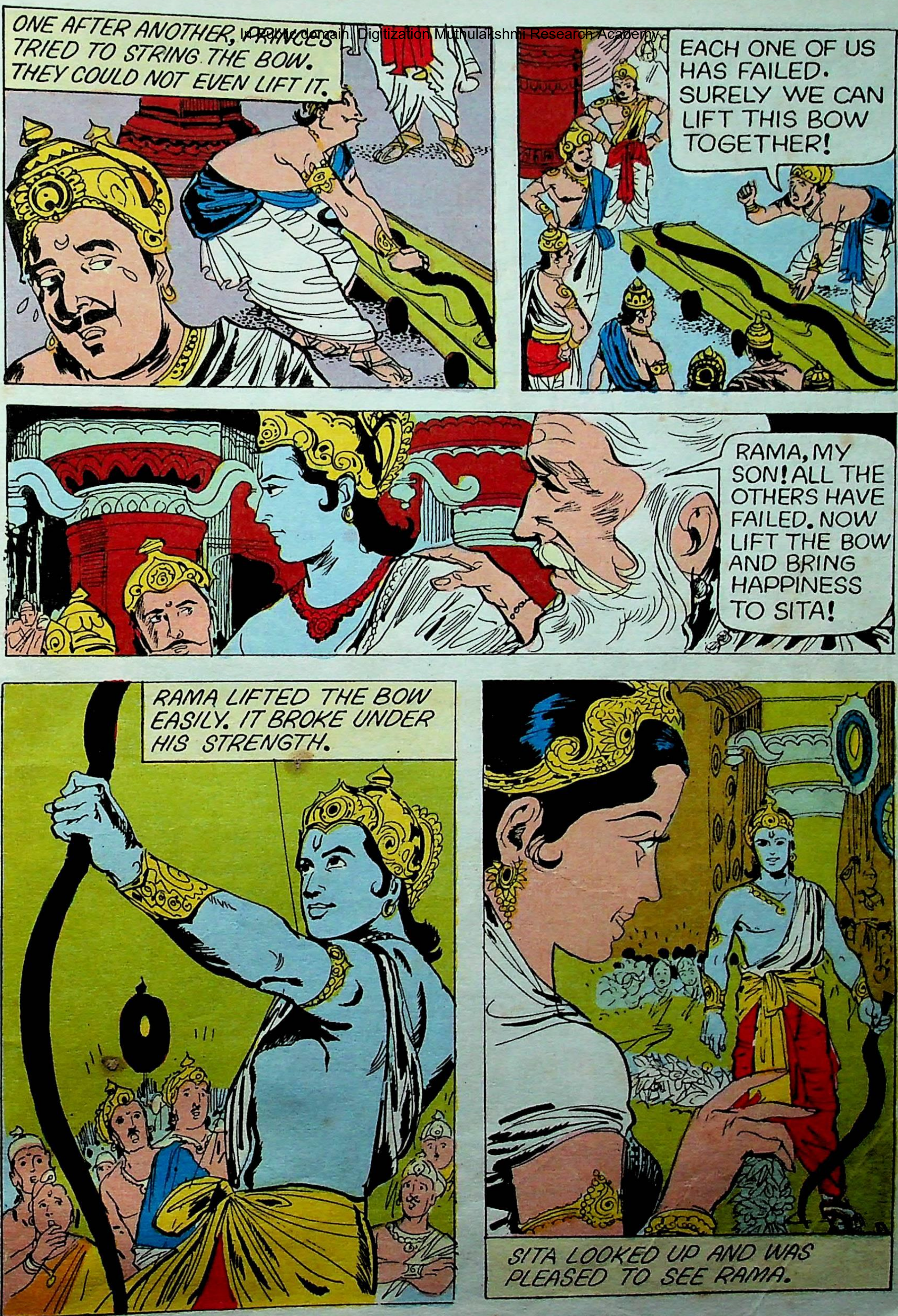
RAMA WAS BORN OF QUEEN KAUSHALYA, BHARATA OF QUEEN KAIKEYI AND LAXMANA AND SHATRUGHNA OF QUEEN SUMITRA. BUT THEY WERE ALL DEEPLY ATTACHED TO ONE ANOTHER.

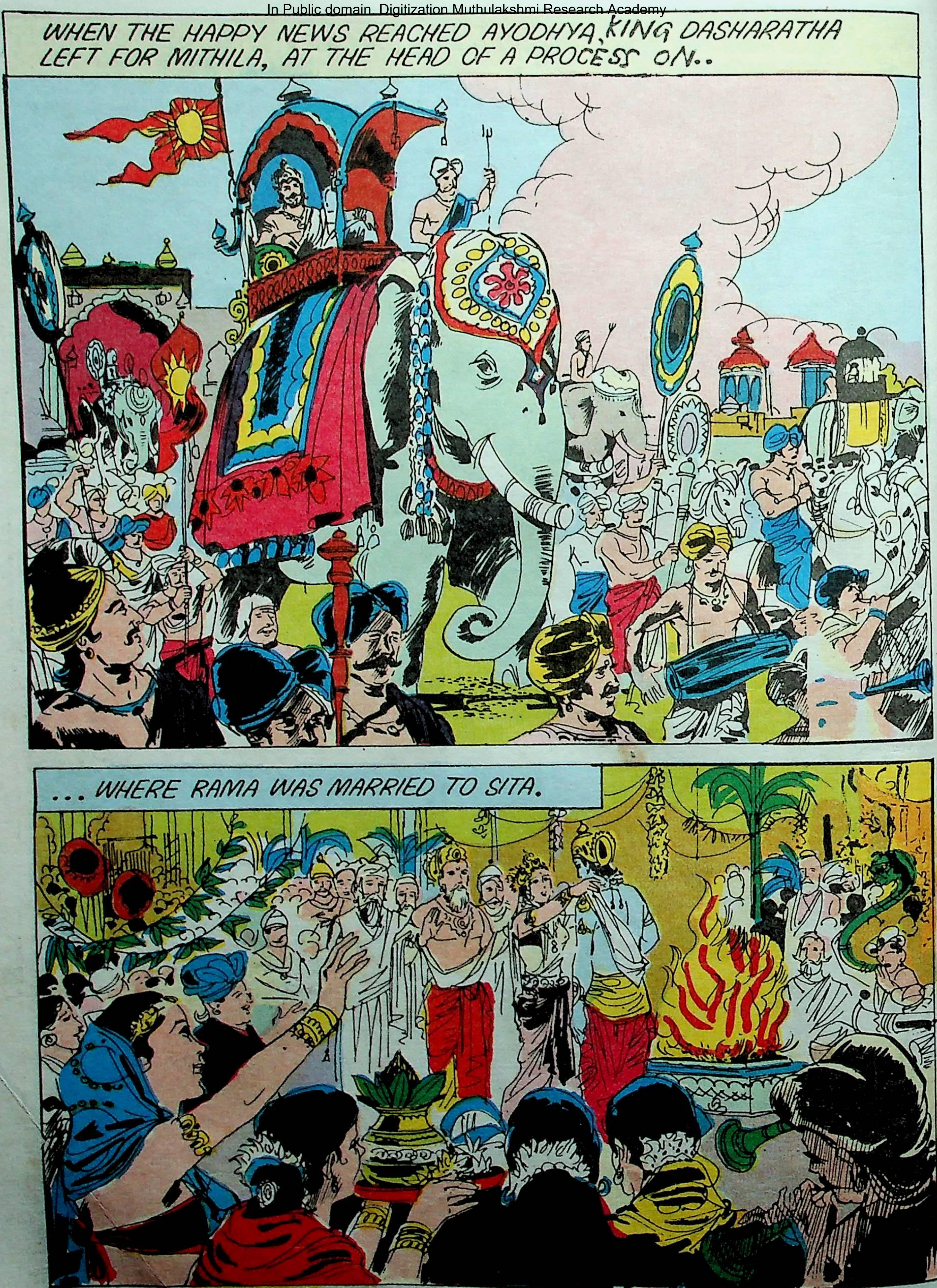

THESE DEMONS ARE TROUBLING ME IN MY PRAYERS. RAMA ALONE CAN HELP.

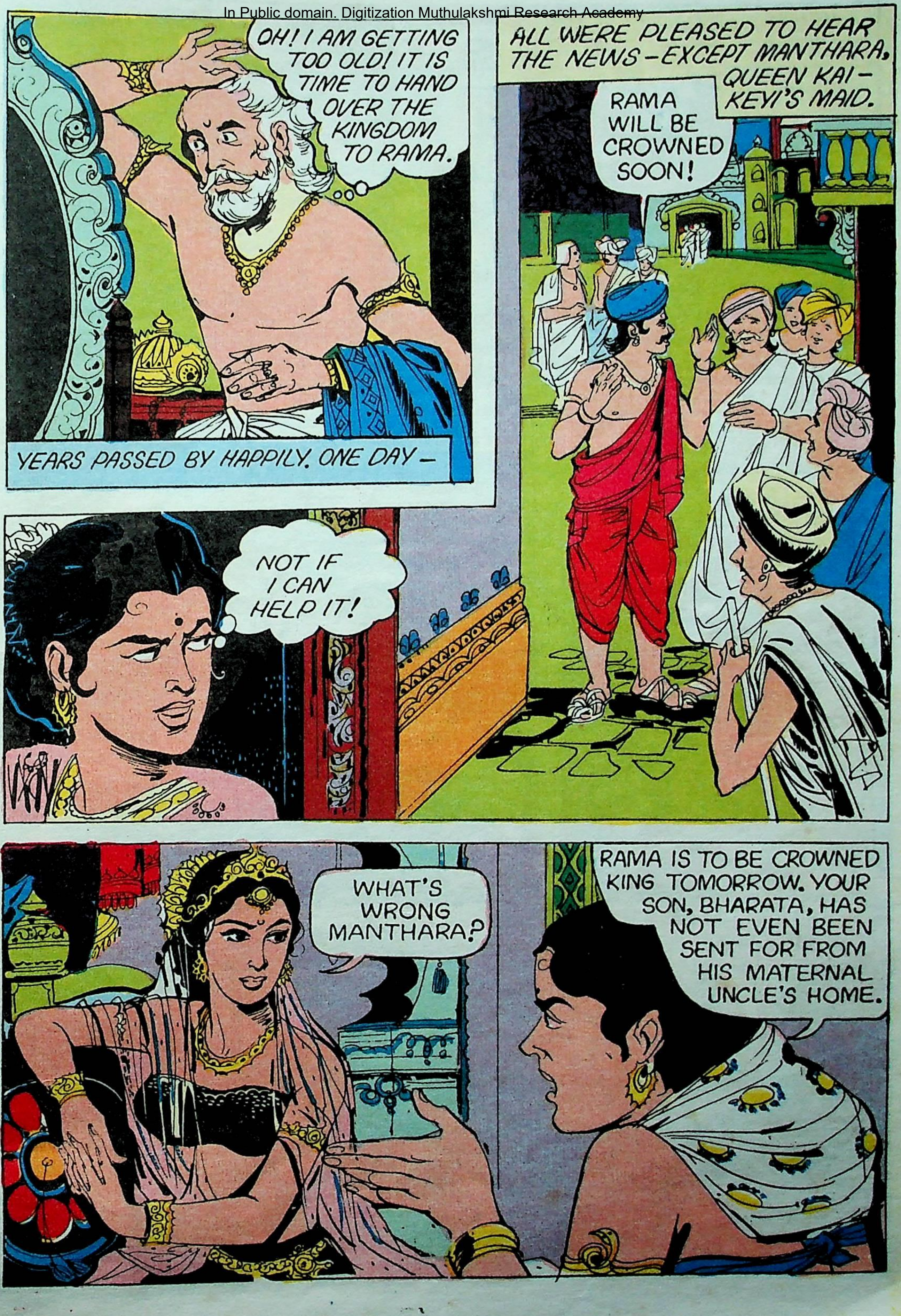
RAMA'S SKILL WITH THE BOW AND ARROW WAS KNOWN FAR AND WIDE. IN THE JUNGLE, SAGE VISHWAMITRA ALSO REMEMBERED IT.

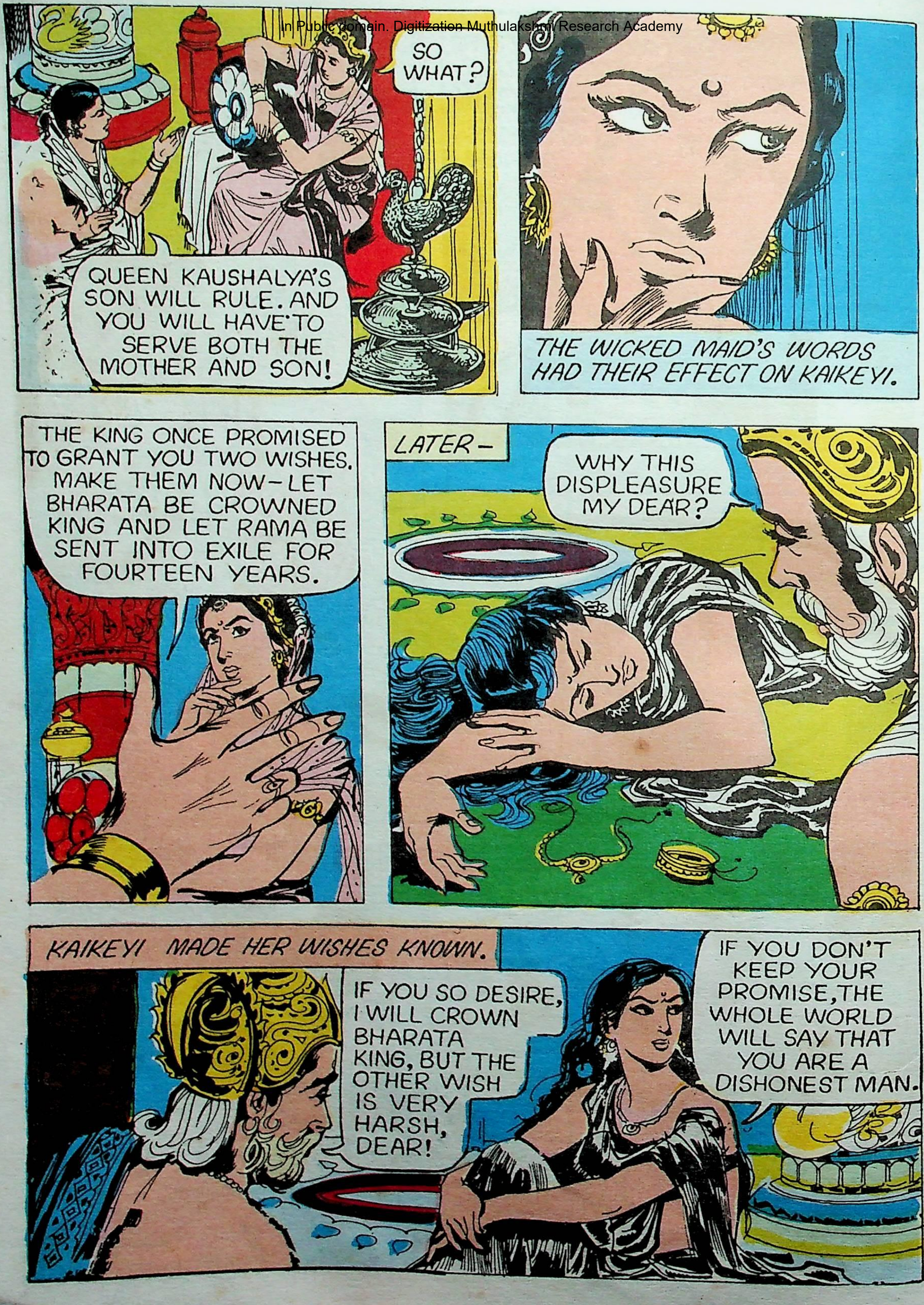

SO, WITH THE PERMISSION OF KING DASHARATHA, RAMA AND LAXMANA WERE BROUGHT TO THE JUNGLE. ONE DAY –
RAMA! HERE COMES THE DEMONESS TATAKA.
THERE WAS A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN TATAKA AND RAMA.
AND FINALLY –
THERE WERE MORE RAIDS BY DEMONS. BUT RAMA'S ARROWS NEVER MISSED THEIR MARK.

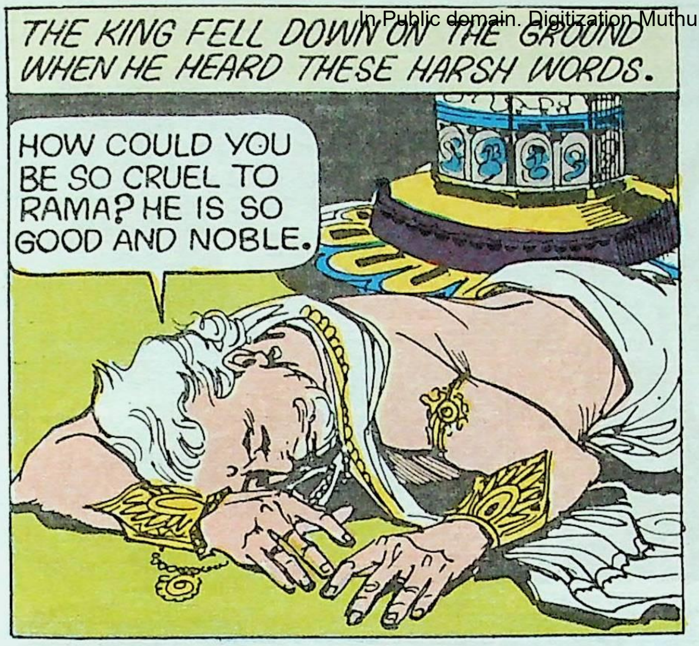

THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS ROAM ABOUT FREELY NOW.
YES, THE DEMONS BOTHER THEM NO MORE, MY SON!
A FEW DAYS LATER –
WE SHALL GO TO WITNESS THE SWAYAMVARA OF SITA, THE DAUGHTER OF RAJA JANAKA.
IN KING JANAKA'S PALACE –
HE WHO SUCCEEDS IN STRINGING THE BOW WILL WIN SITA'S HAND IN MARRIAGE.

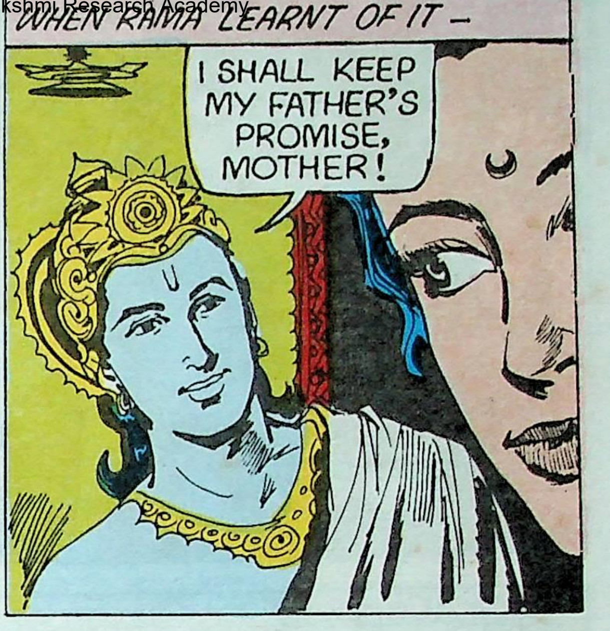

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, PRINCES TRIED TO STRING THE BOW. THEY COULD NOT EVEN LIFT IT.
EACH ONE OF US HAS FAILED. SURELY WE CAN LIFT THIS BOW TOGETHER!
RAMA, MY SON! ALL THE OTHERS HAVE FAILED. NOW LIFT THE BOW AND BRING HAPPINESS TO SITA!
RAMA LIFTED THE BOW EASILY. IT BROKE UNDER HIS STRENGTH.
SITA LOOKED UP AND WAS PLEASED TO SEE RAMA.

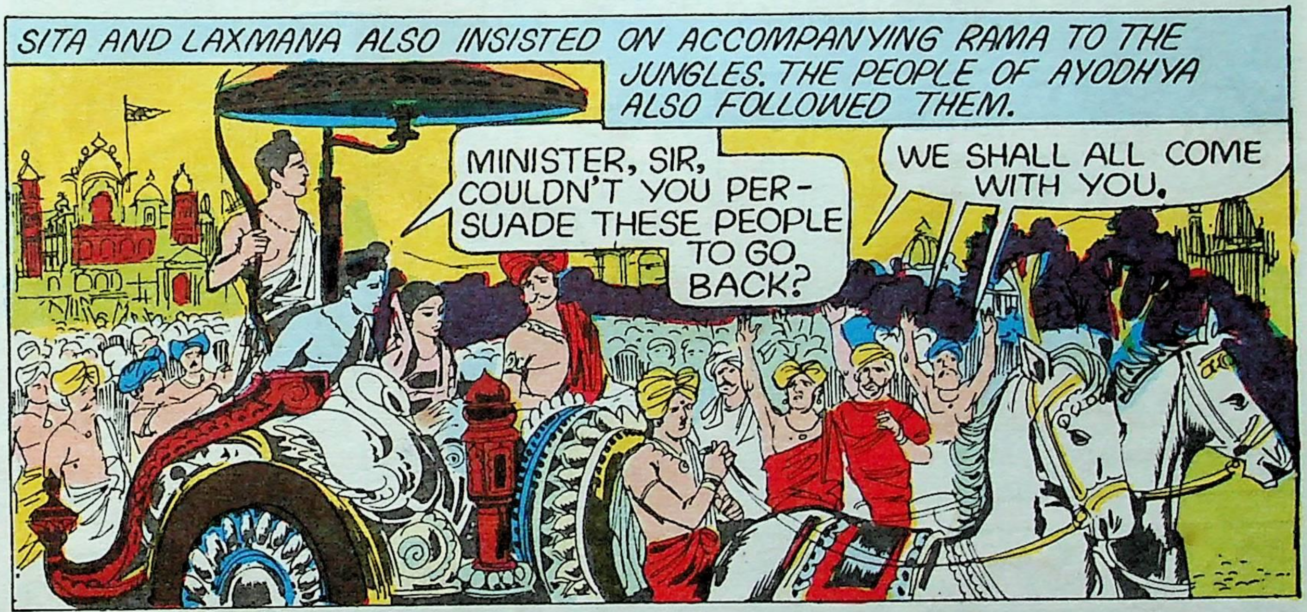

WHEN THE HAPPY NEWS REACHED AYODHYA, KING DASHARATHA LEFT FOR MITHILA, AT THE HEAD OF A PROCESSION..
... WHERE RAMA WAS MARRIED TO SITA.

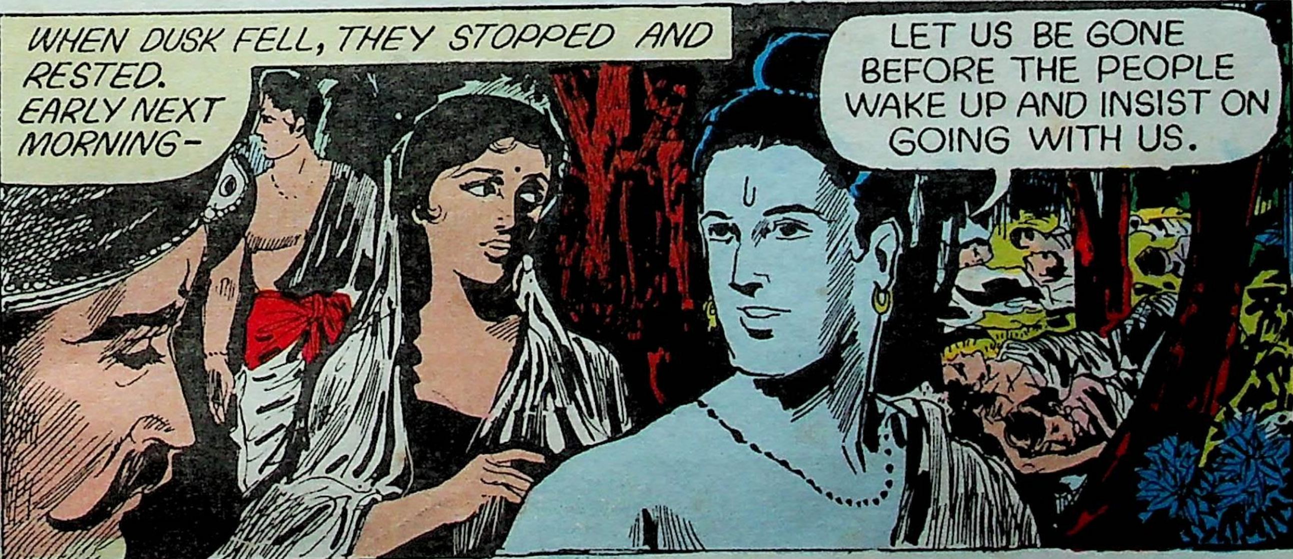

OH! I AM GETTING TOO OLD! IT IS TIME TO HAND OVER THE KINGDOM TO RAMA.
YEARS PASSED BY HAPPILY. ONE DAY –
ALL WERE PLEASED TO HEAR THE NEWS – EXCEPT MANTHARA, QUEEN KAI-KEYI'S MAID.
RAMA WILL BE CROWNED SOON!
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!
WHAT'S WRONG MANTHARA?
RAMA IS TO BE CROWNED KING TOMORROW. YOUR SON, BHARATA, HAS NOT EVEN BEEN SENT FOR FROM HIS MATERNAL UNCLE'S HOME.

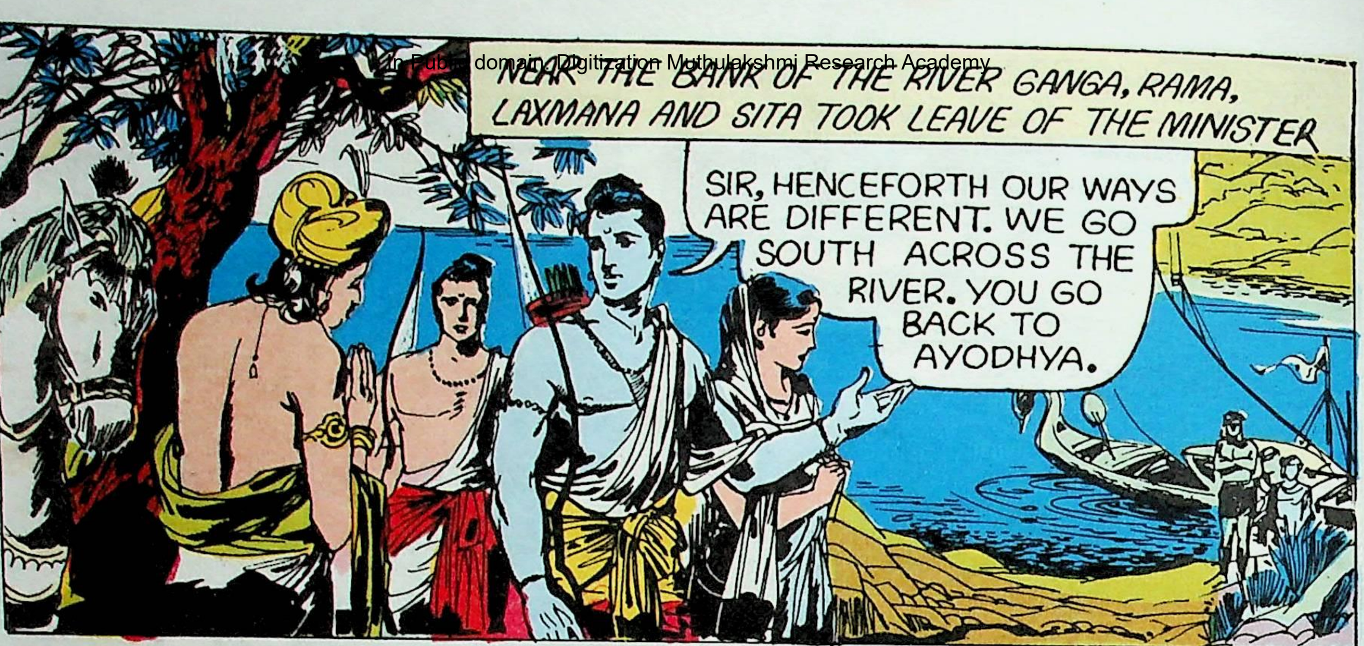

SO WHAT?
QUEEN KAUSHALYA'S SON WILL RULE. AND YOU WILL HAVE TO SERVE BOTH THE MOTHER AND SON!
THE WICKED MAID'S WORDS HAD THEIR EFFECT ON KAIKEYI.
THE KING ONCE PROMISED TO GRANT YOU TWO WISHES. MAKE THEM NOW–LET BHARATA BE CROWNED KING AND LET RAMA BE SENT INTO EXILE FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.
LATER–
WHY THIS DISPLEASURE MY DEAR?
KAIKEYI MADE HER WISHES KNOWN.
IF YOU SO DESIRE, I WILL CROWN BHARATA KING, BUT THE OTHER WISH IS VERY HARSH, DEAR!
IF YOU DON'T KEEP YOUR PROMISE, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL SAY THAT YOU ARE A DISHONEST MAN.

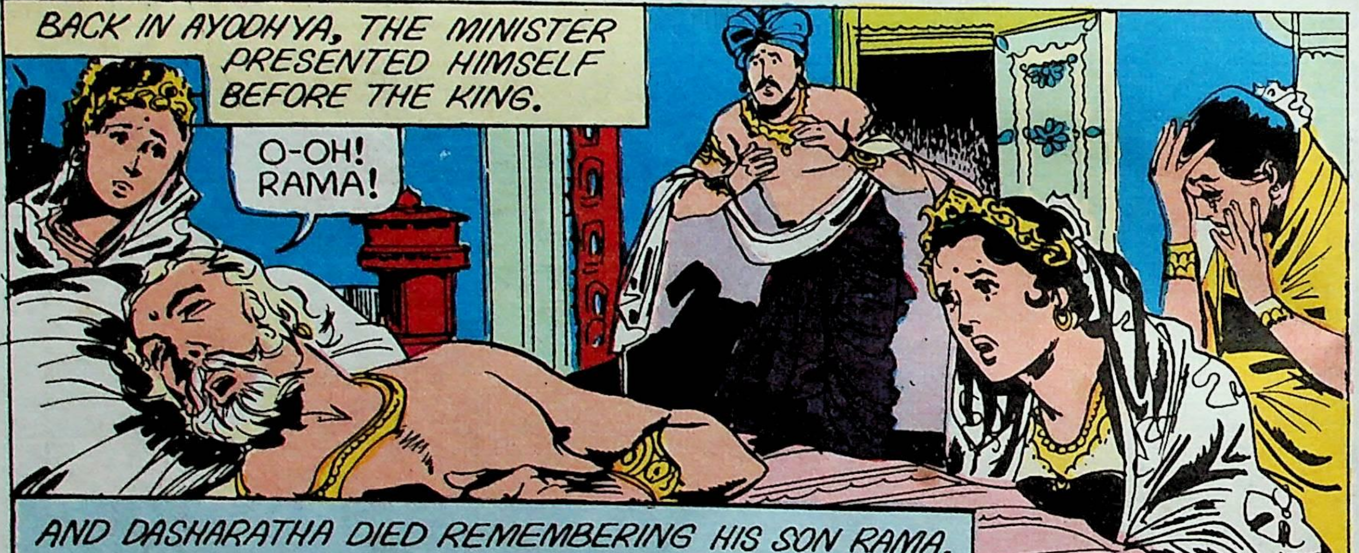

THE KING FELL DOWN ON THE GROUND WHEN HE HEARD THESE HARSH WORDS.
HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL TO RAMA? HE IS SO GOOD AND NOBLE.

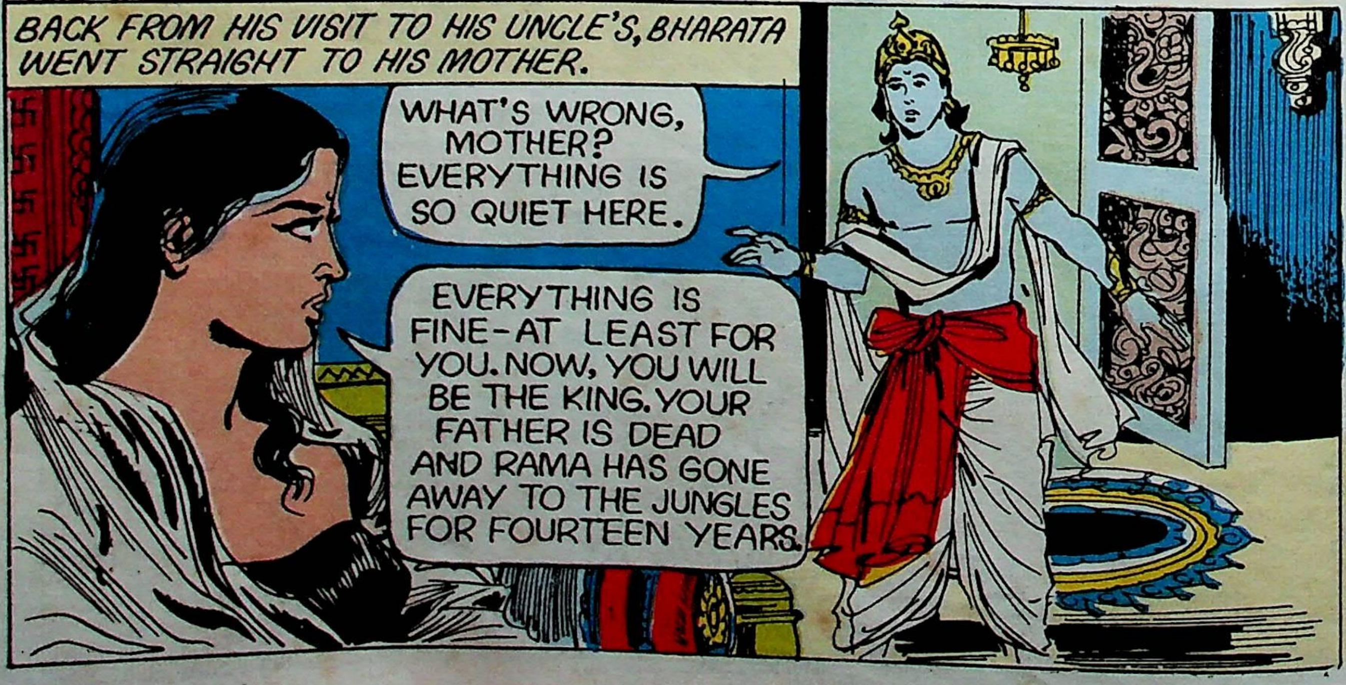

WHEN RAMA LEARNT OF IT –
I SHALL KEEP MY FATHER'S PROMISE, MOTHER!

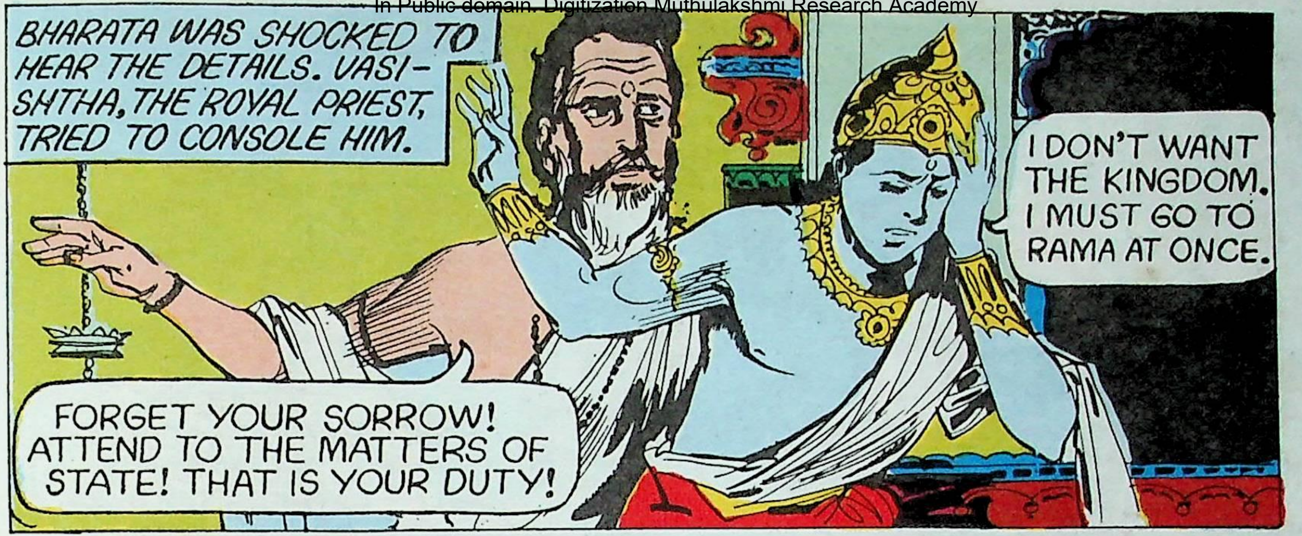

SITA AND LAXMANA ALSO INSISTED ON ACCOMPANYING RAMA TO THE JUNGLES. THE PEOPLE OF AYODHYA ALSO FOLLOWED THEM.
MINISTER, SIR, COULDN'T YOU PERSUADE THESE PEOPLE TO GO BACK?
WE SHALL ALL COME WITH YOU.


WHEN DUSK FELL, THEY STOPPED AND RESTED. EARLY NEXT MORNING –
LET US BE GONE BEFORE THE PEOPLE WAKE UP AND INSIST ON GOING WITH US.

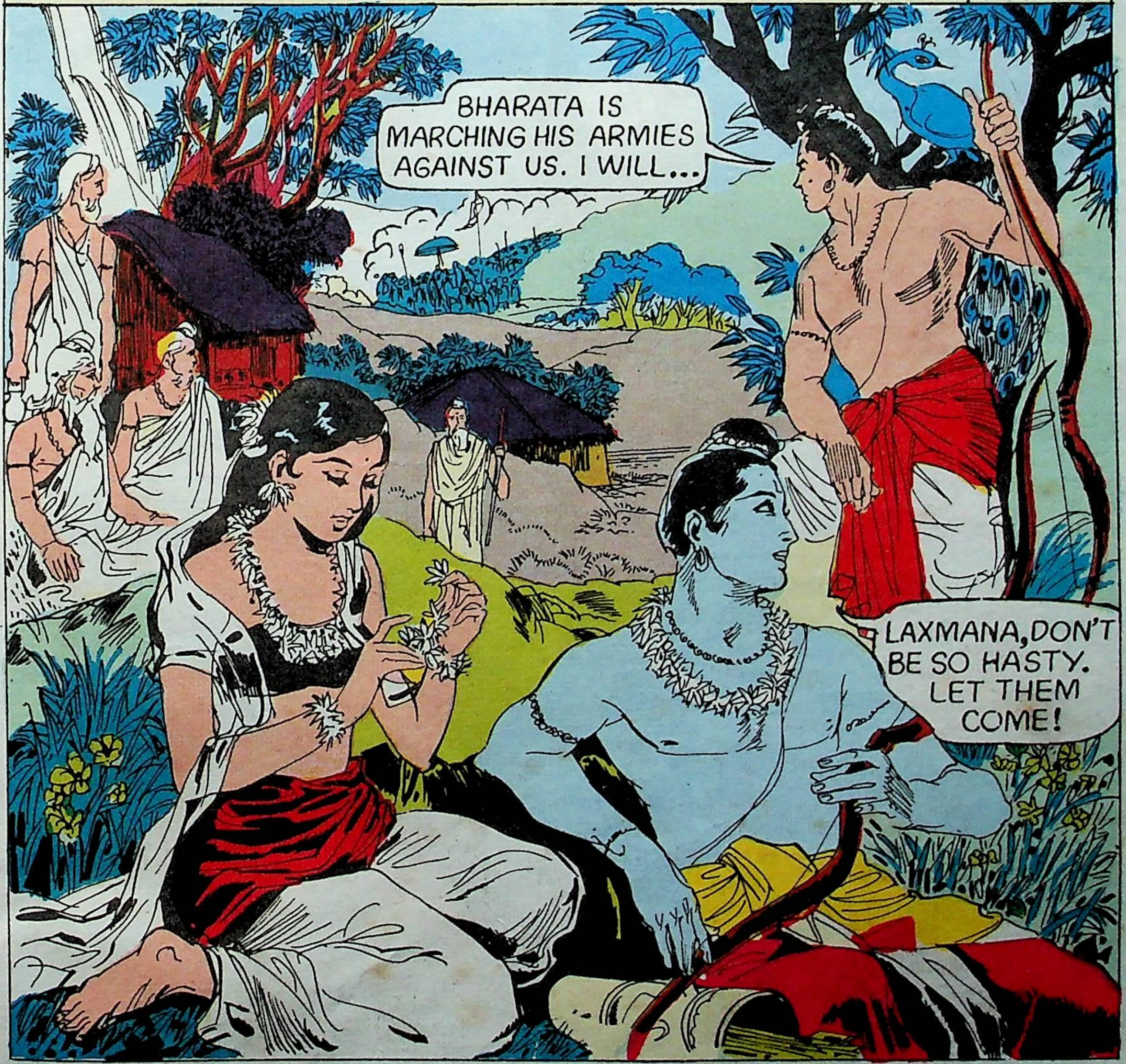

NEAR THE BANK OF THE RIVER GANGA, RAMA, LAXMANA AND SITA TOOK LEAVE OF THE MINISTER
SIR, HENCEFORTH OUR WAYS ARE DIFFERENT. WE GO SOUTH ACROSS THE RIVER. YOU GO BACK TO AYODHYA.

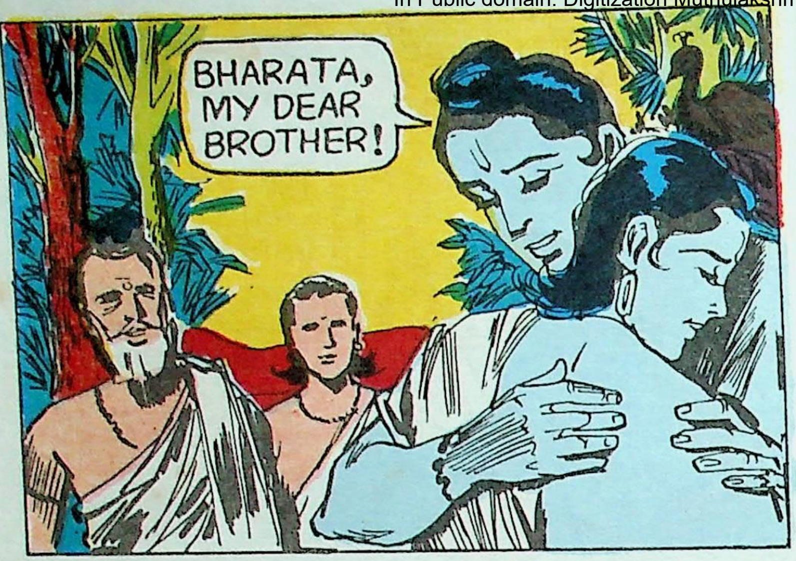

BACK IN AYODHYA, THE MINISTER PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE THE KING.
O-OH! RAMA!
AND DASHARATHA DIED REMEMBERING HIS SON RAMA.

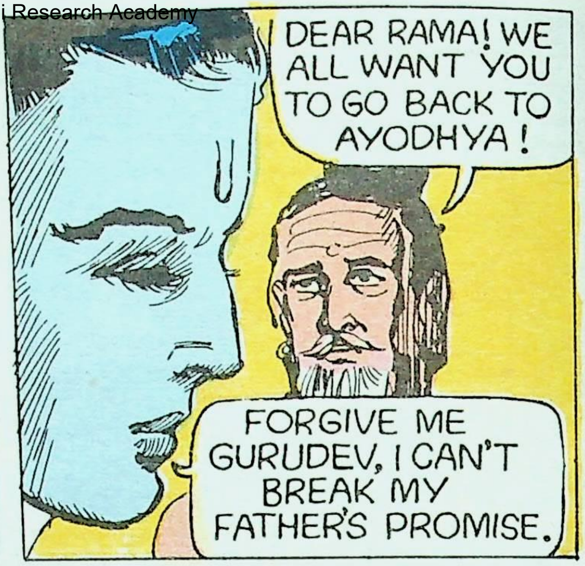

BACK FROM HIS VISIT TO HIS UNCLE'S, BHARATA WENT STRAIGHT TO HIS MOTHER.
WHAT'S WRONG, MOTHER? EVERYTHING IS SO QUIET HERE.
EVERYTHING IS FINE-AT LEAST FOR YOU. NOW, YOU WILL BE THE KING. YOUR FATHER IS DEAD AND RAMA HAS GONE AWAY TO THE JUNGLES FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.

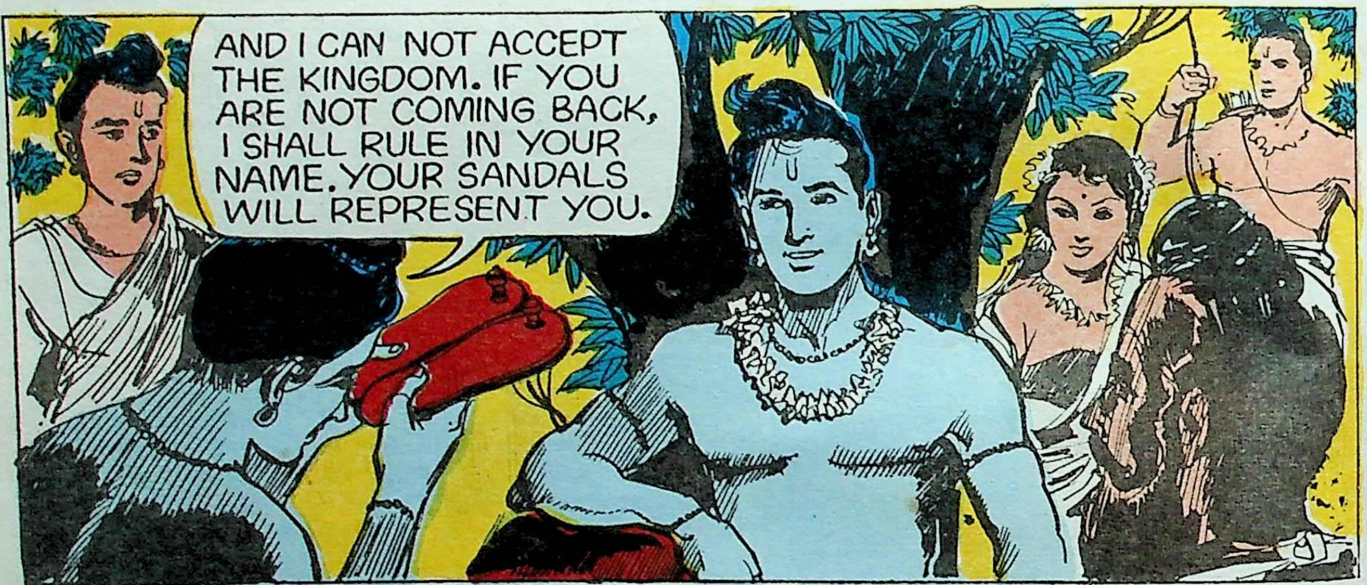

BHARATA WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR THE DETAILS. VASISHTHA, THE ROYAL PRIEST, TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.
I DON'T WANT THE KINGDOM. I MUST GO TO RAMA AT ONCE.
FORGET YOUR SORROW! ATTEND TO THE MATTERS OF STATE! THAT IS YOUR DUTY!

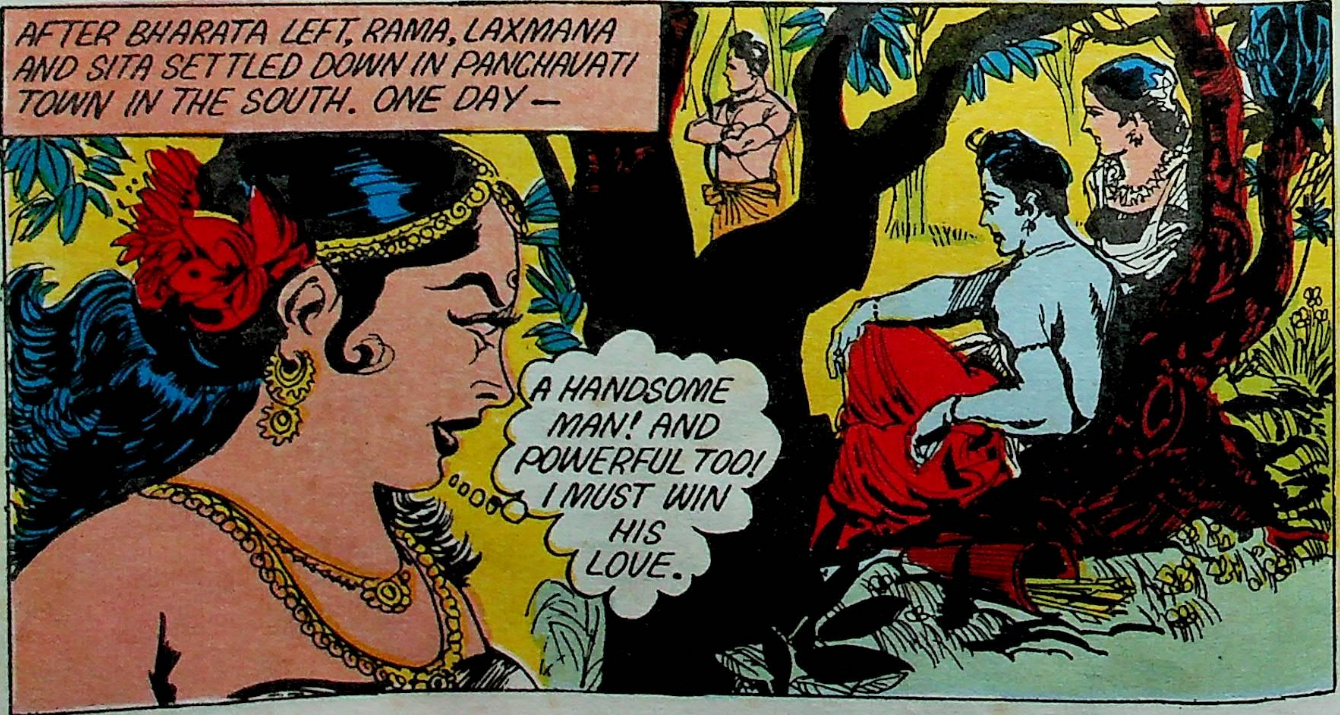
AT CHITRAKOOT, WHERE RAMA, LAXMANA AND SITA HAD MADE THEIR HOME—

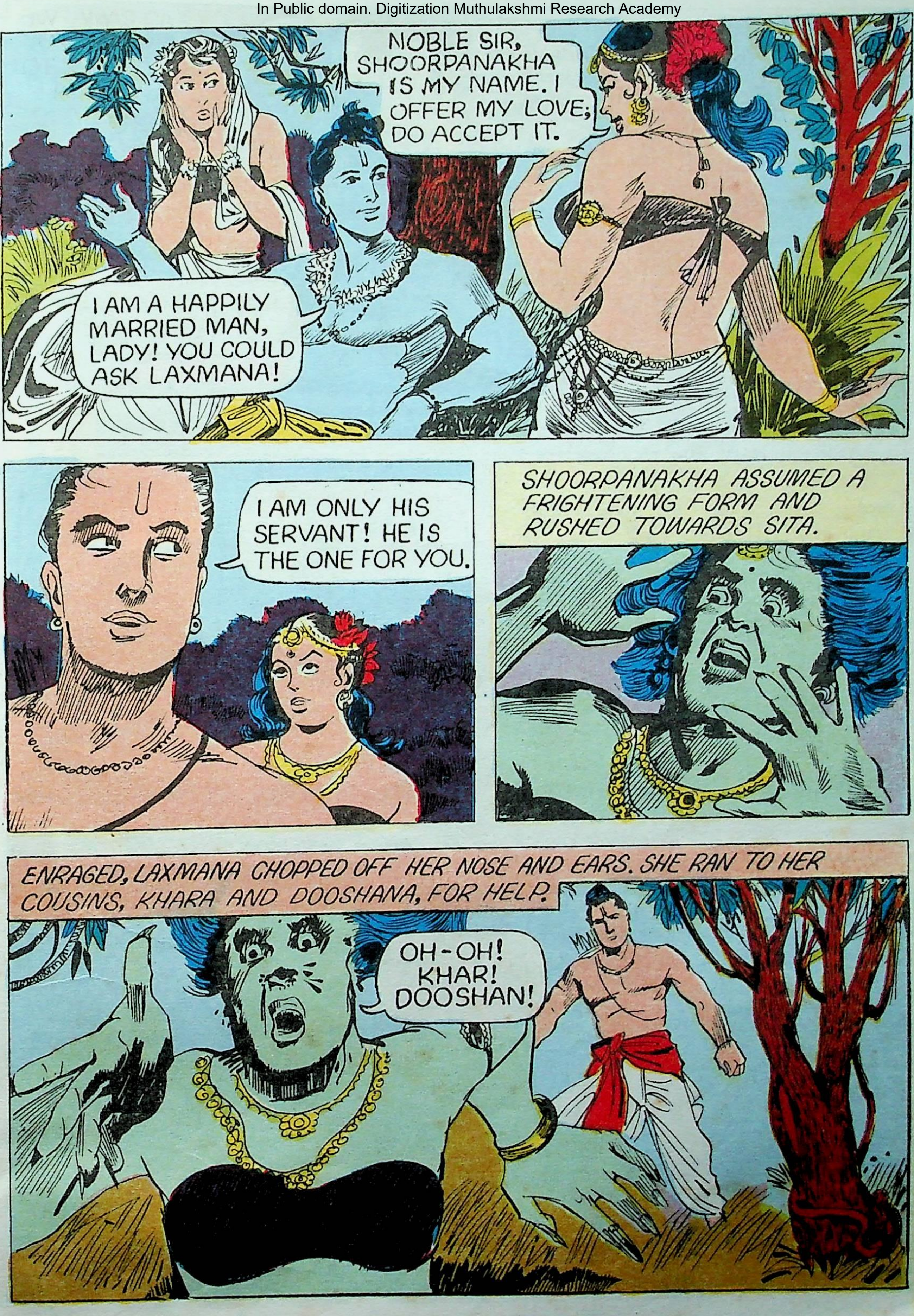

BHARATA IS MARCHING HIS ARMIES AGAINST US. I WILL...
LAXMANA, DON'T BE SO HASTY. LET THEM COME!

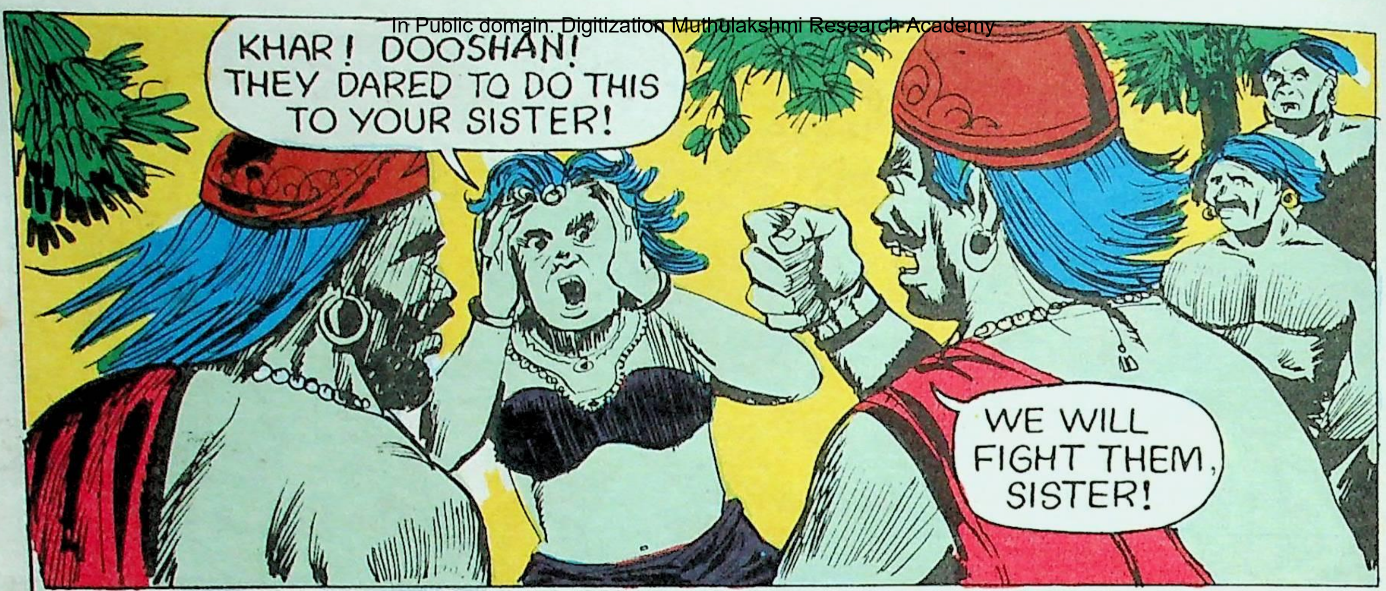

BHARATA, MY DEAR BROTHER!


DEAR RAMA! WE ALL WANT YOU TO GO BACK TO AYODHYA!
FORGIVE ME GURUDEV, I CAN'T BREAK MY FATHER'S PROMISE.

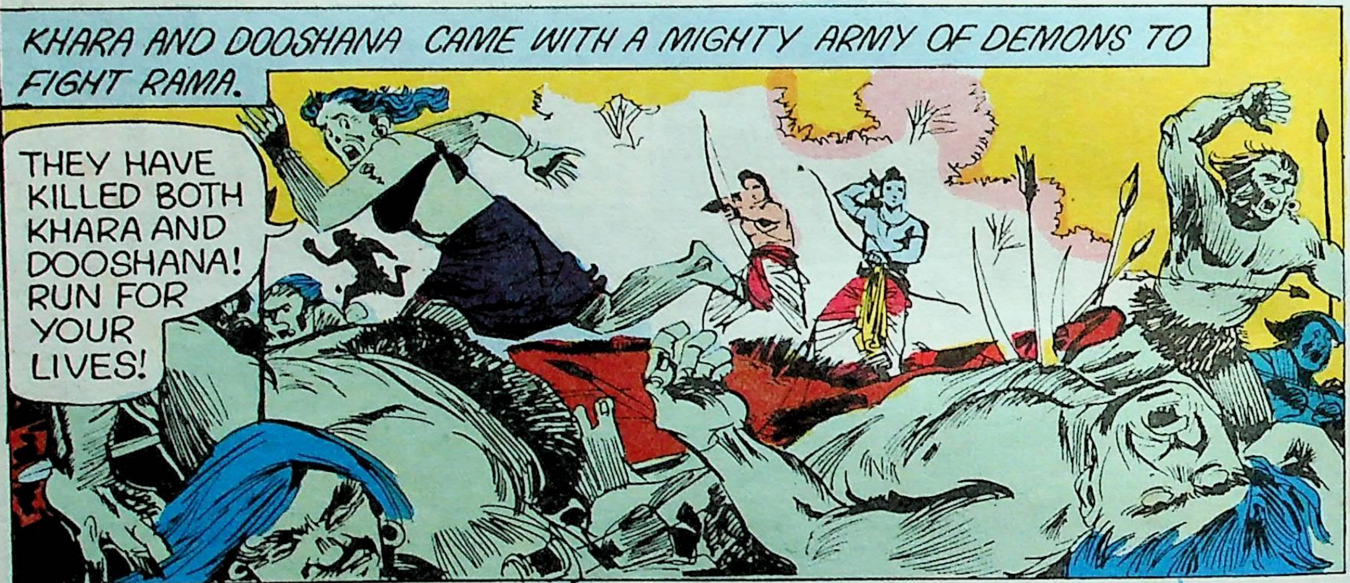

AND I CAN NOT ACCEPT THE KINGDOM. IF YOU ARE NOT COMING BACK, I SHALL RULE IN YOUR NAME. YOUR SANDALS WILL REPRESENT YOU.


AFTER BHARATA LEFT, RAMA, LAXMANA AND SITA SETTLED DOWN IN PANCHAVATI TOWN IN THE SOUTH. ONE DAY—
A HANDSOME MAN! AND POWERFUL TOO! I MUST WIN HIS LOVE.

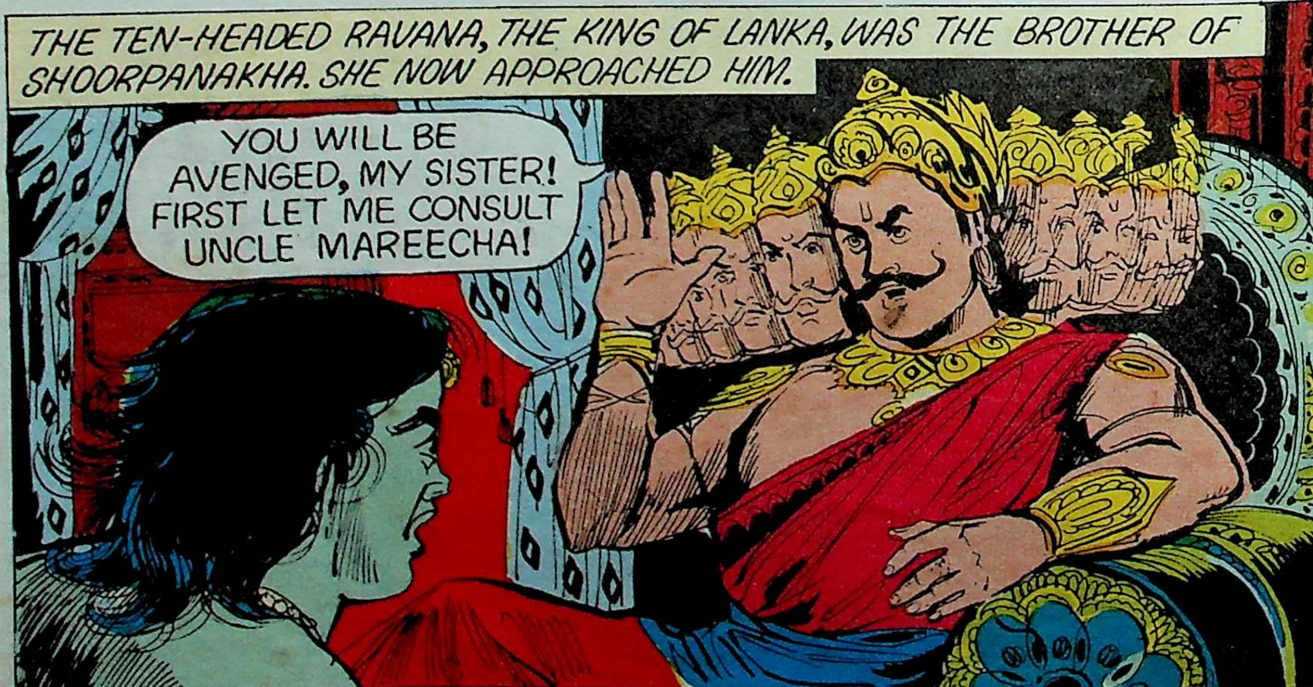

NOBLE SIR, SHOORPANAKHA IS MY NAME. I OFFER MY LOVE; DO ACCEPT IT.
I AM A HAPPILY MARRIED MAN, LADY! YOU COULD ASK LAXMANA!
I AM ONLY HIS SERVANT! HE IS THE ONE FOR YOU.
SHOORPANAKHA ASSUMED A FRIGHTENING FORM AND RUSHED TOWARDS SITA.
ENRAGED, LAXMANA CHOPPED OFF HER NOSE AND EARS. SHE RAN TO HER COUSINS, KHARA AND DOOSHANA, FOR HELP.
OH-OH! KHAR! DOOSHAN!

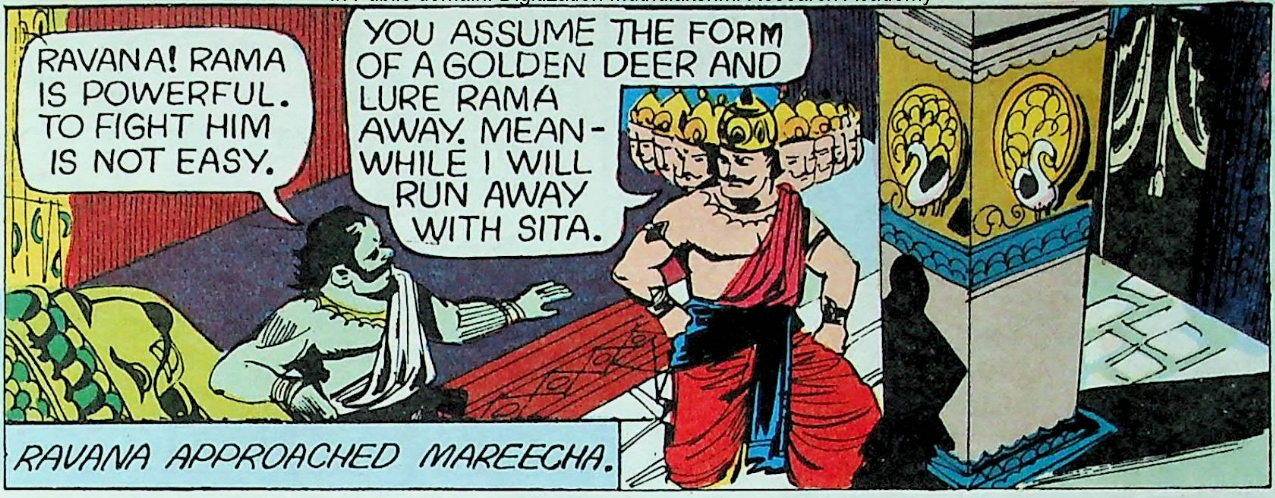

KHAR! DOOSHAN! THEY DARED TO DO THIS TO YOUR SISTER!
WE WILL FIGHT THEM, SISTER!

KHARA AND DOOSHANA CAME WITH A MIGHTY ARMY OF DEMONS TO FIGHT RAMA.

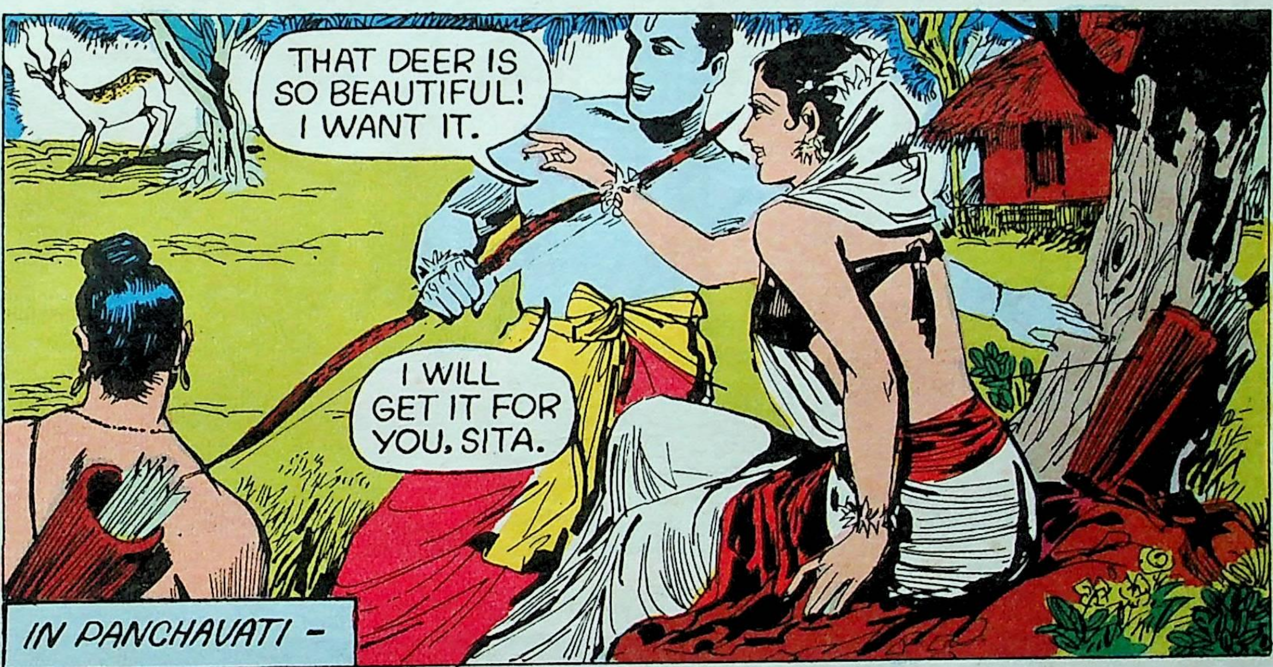

THEY HAVE KILLED BOTH KHARA AND DOOSHANA! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA, THE KING OF LANKA, WAS THE BROTHER OF SHOORPANAKHA. SHE NOW APPROACHED HIM.


YOU WILL BE AVENGED, MY SISTER! FIRST LET ME CONSULT UNCLE MAREECHA!

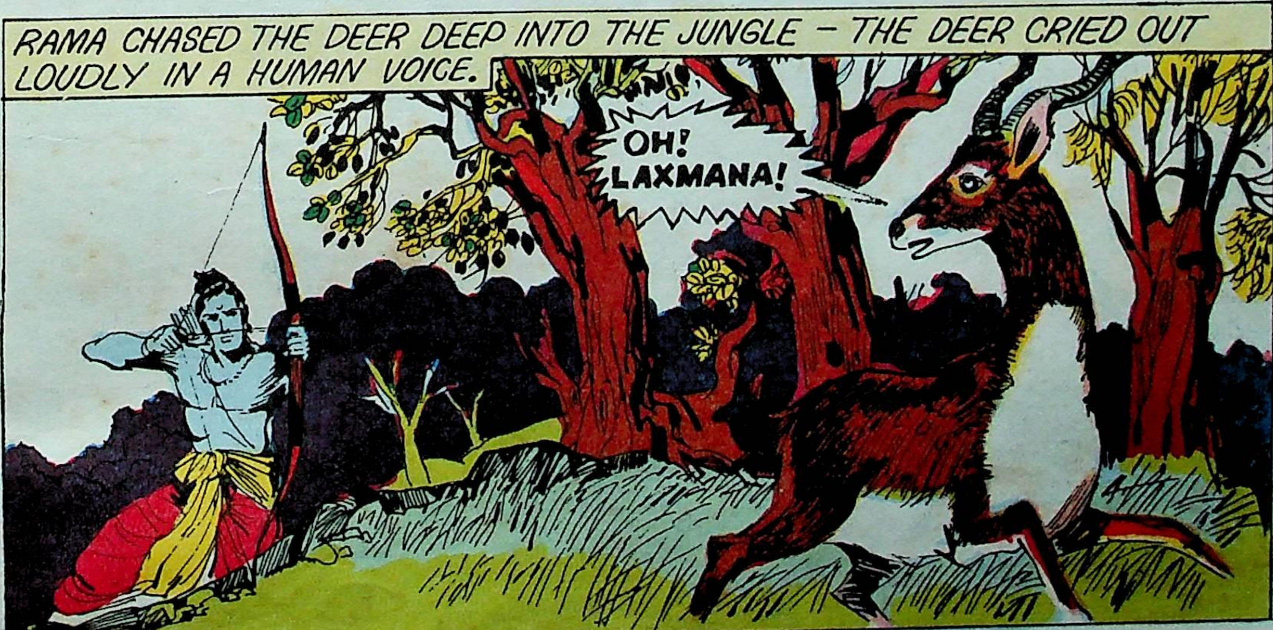

RAVANA! RAMA IS POWERFUL. TO FIGHT HIM IS NOT EASY.
YOU ASSUME THE FORM OF A GOLDEN DEER AND LURE RAMA AWAY. MEANWHILE I WILL RUN AWAY WITH SITA.

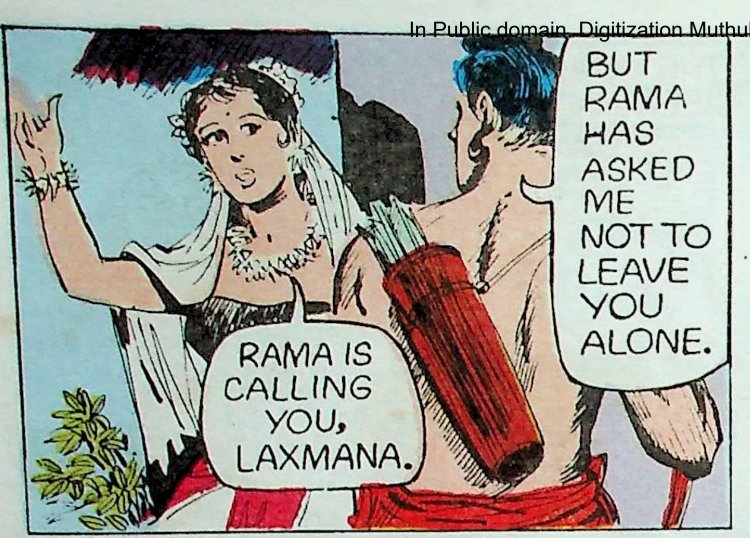
RAVANA APPROACHED MAREECHA.

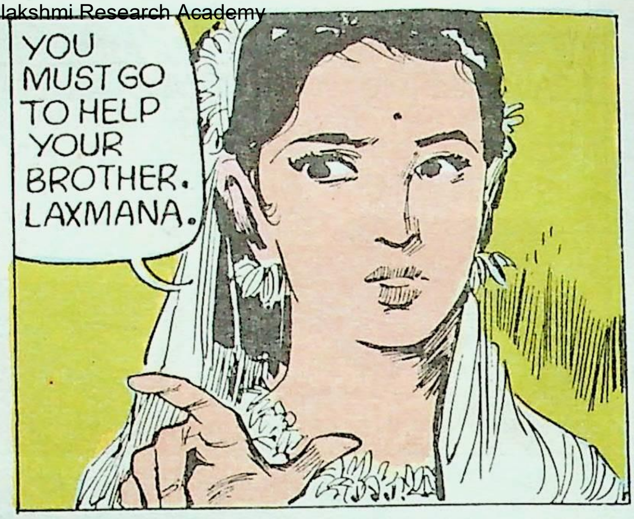

THAT DEER IS SO BEAUTIFUL! I WANT IT.
I WILL GET IT FOR YOU, SITA.

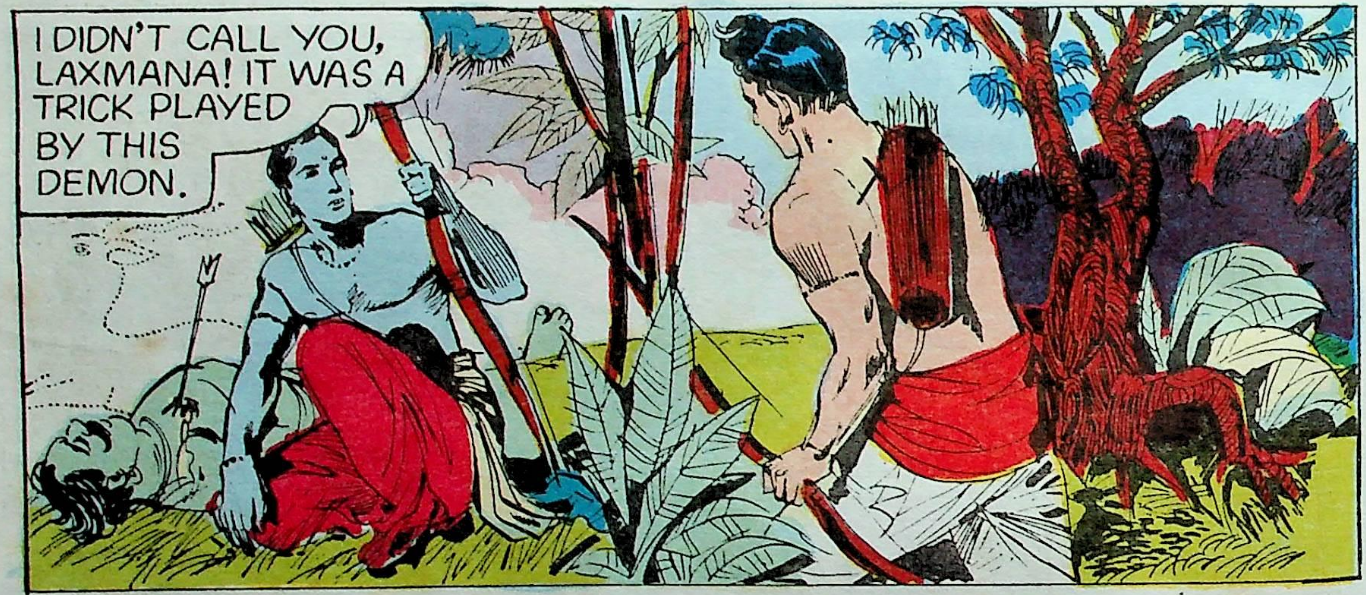
IN PANCHAVATI -

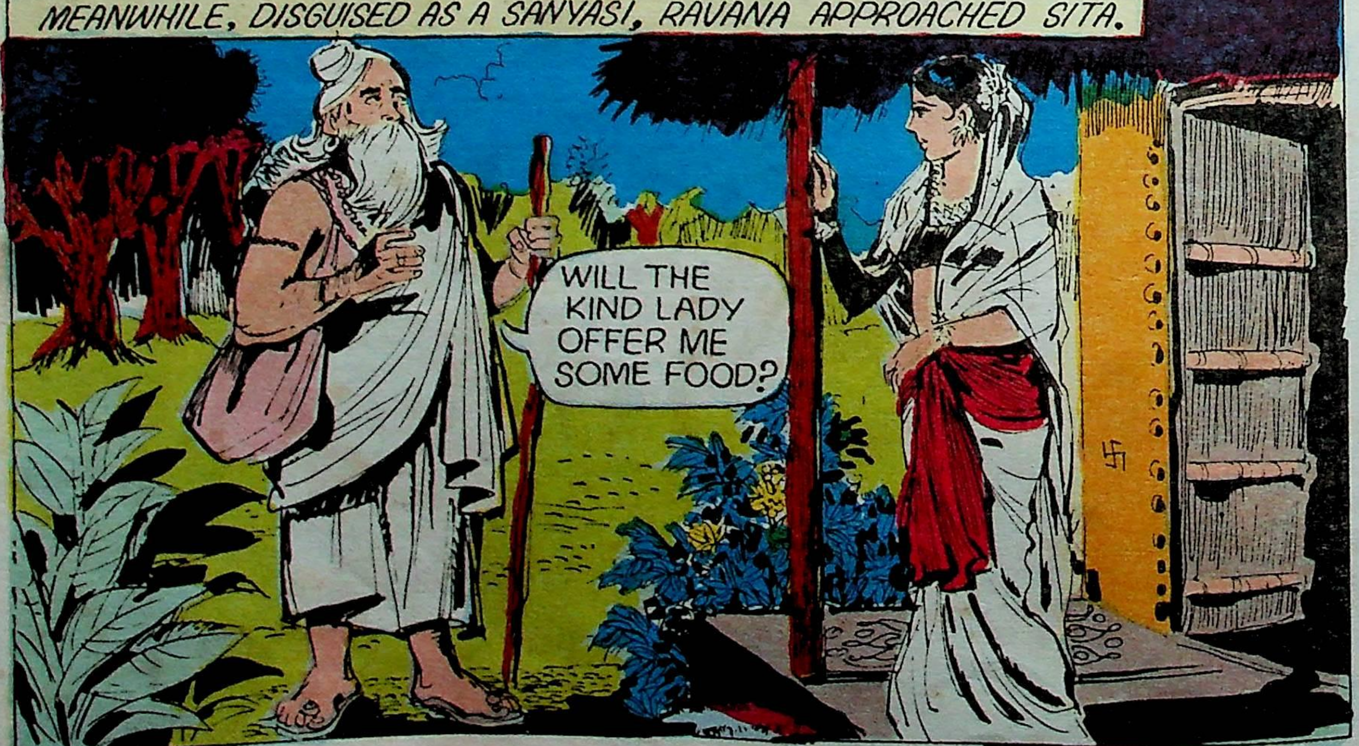
RAMA CHASED THE DEER DEEP INTO THE JUNGLE - THE DEER CRIED OUT LOUDLY IN A HUMAN VOICE.

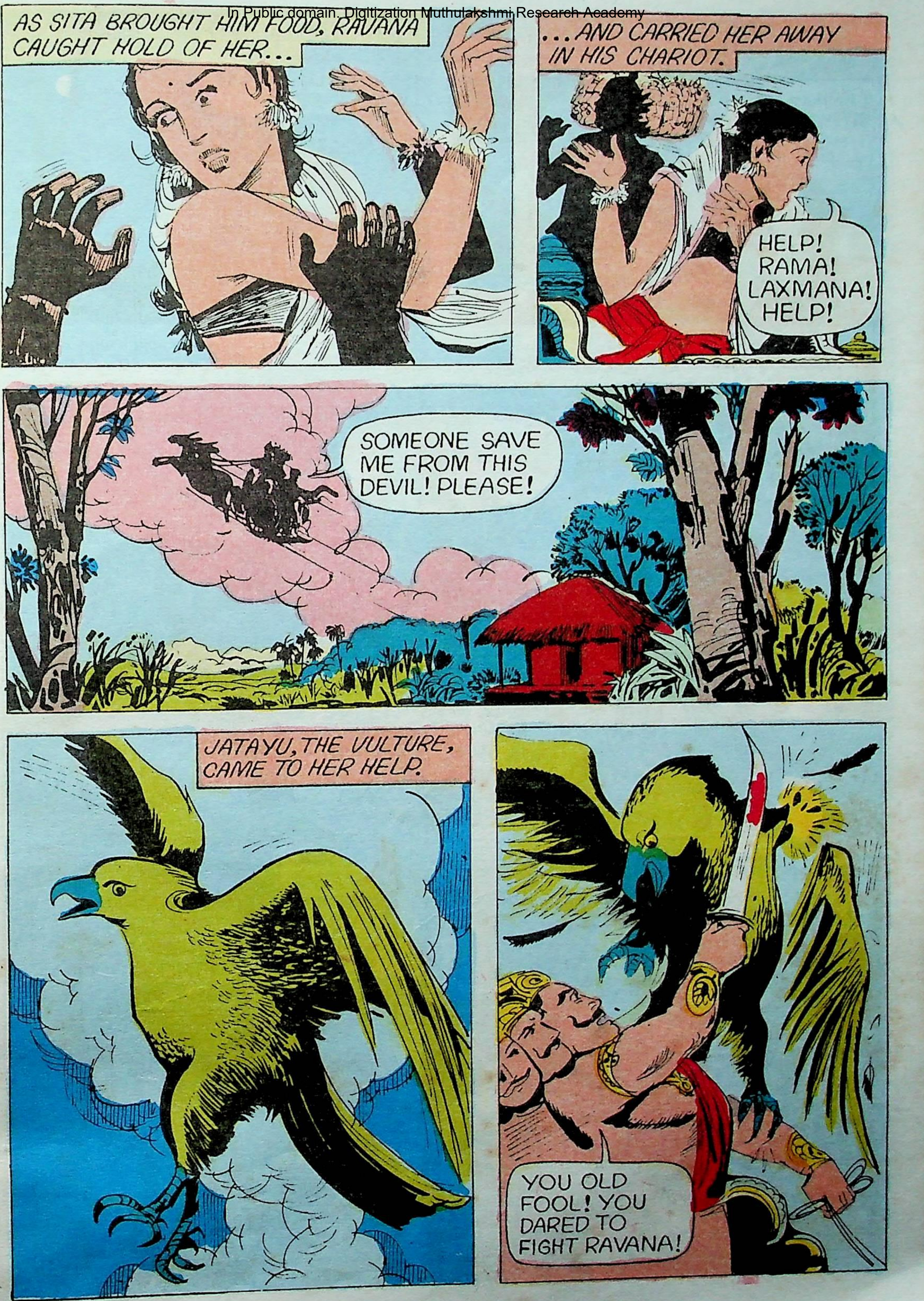


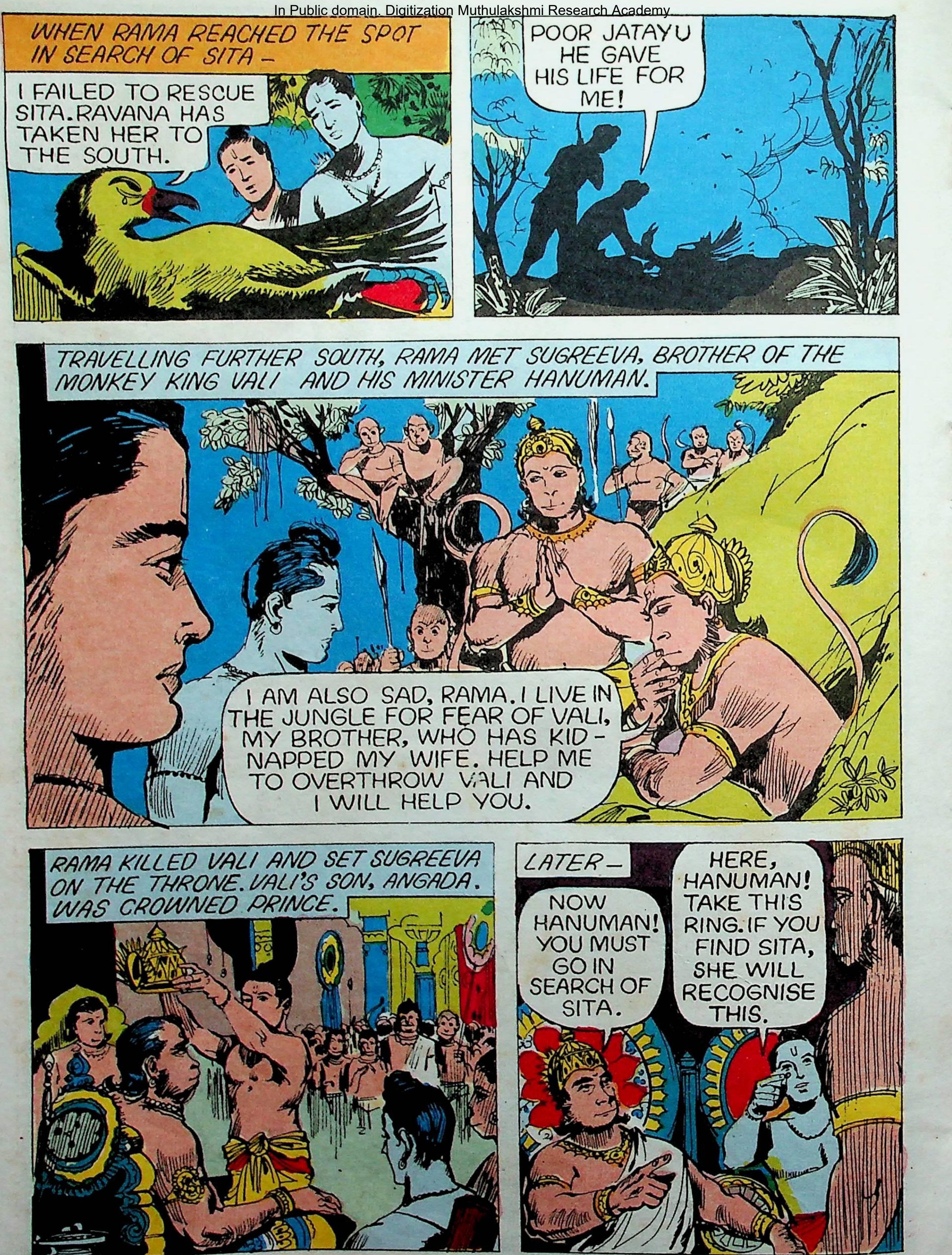

RAMA IS CALLING YOU, LAXMANA.
BUT RAMA HAS ASKED ME NOT TO LEAVE YOU ALONE.

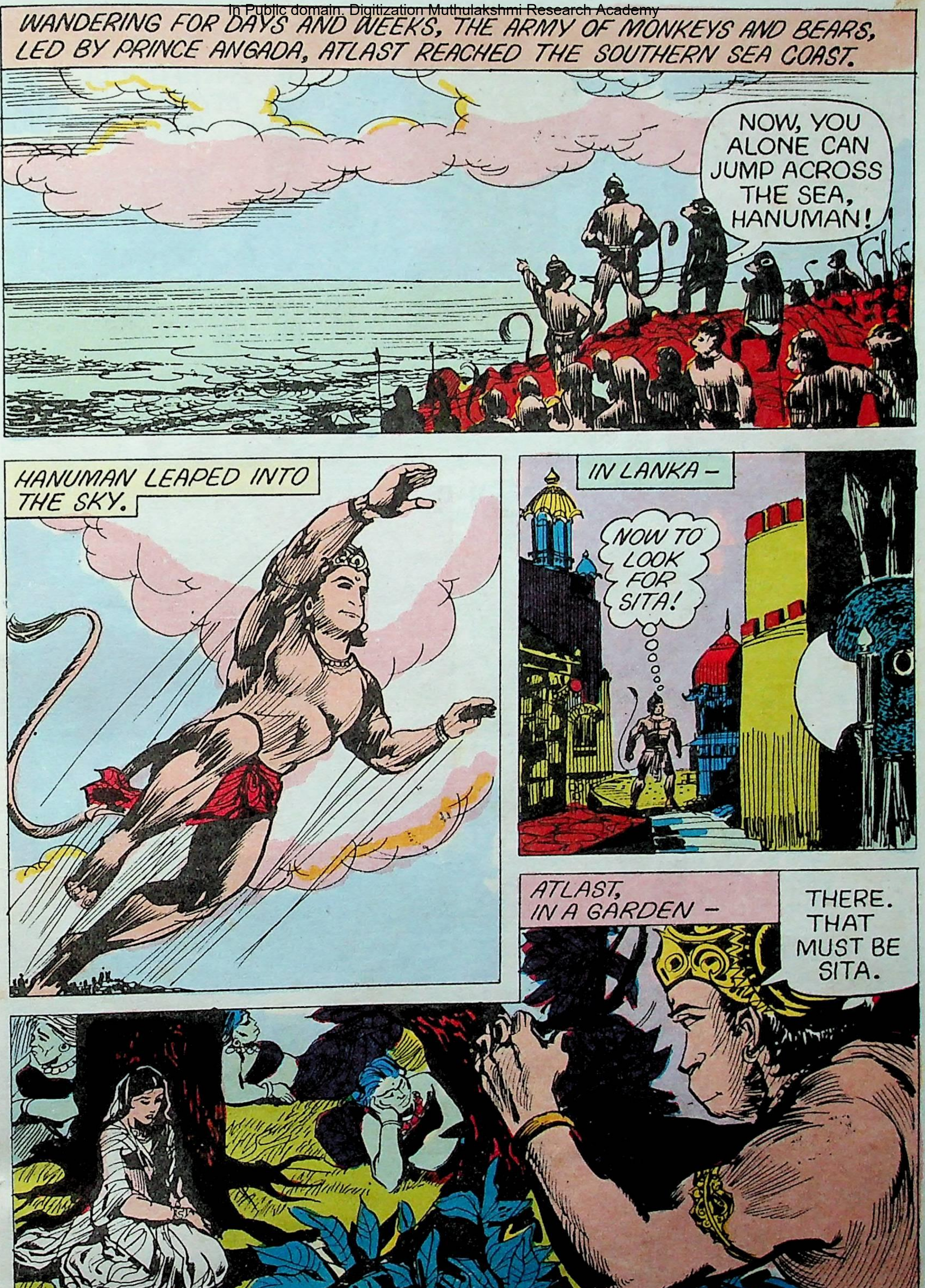

YOU MUST GO TO HELP YOUR BROTHER. LAXMANA.

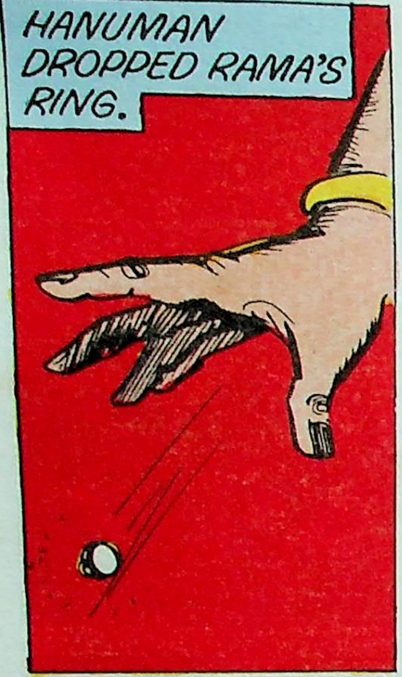

I DIDN'T CALL YOU, LAXMANA! IT WAS A TRICK PLAYED BY THIS DEMON.

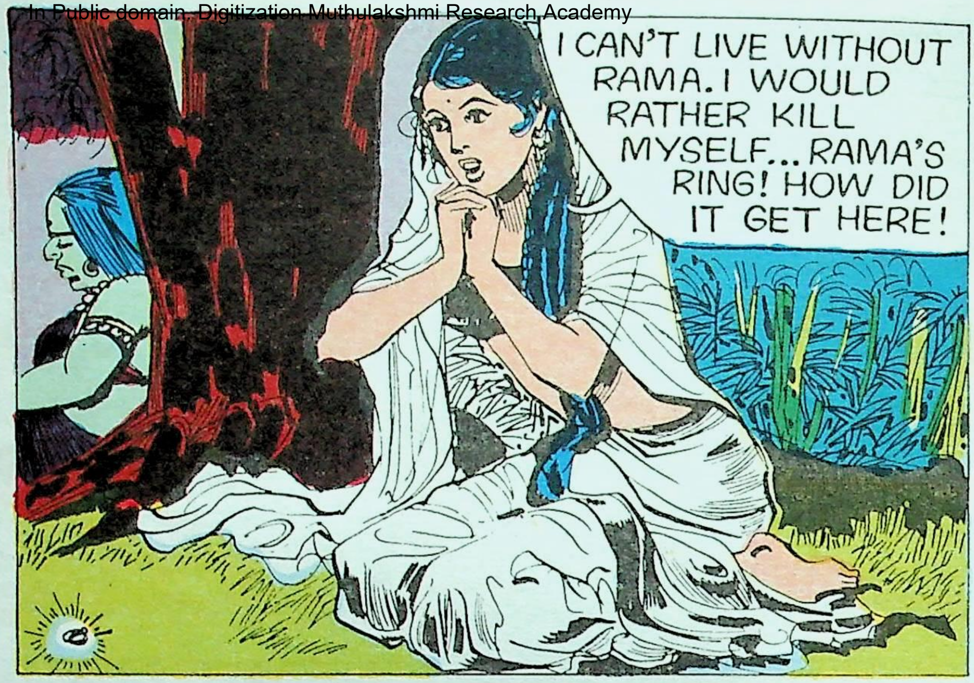

MEANWHILE, DISGUISED AS A SANYASI, RAVANA APPROACHED SITA.
WILL THE KIND LADY OFFER ME SOME FOOD?

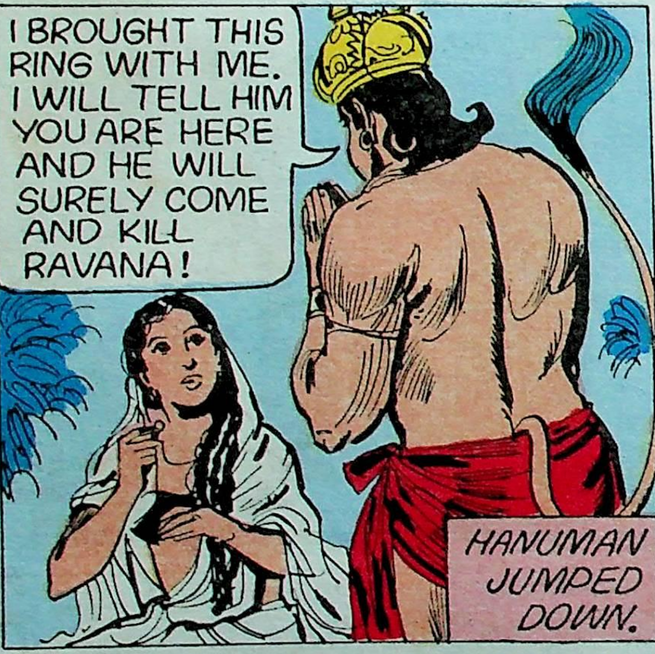

AS SITA BROUGHT HIM FOOD, RAVANA CAUGHT HOLD OF HER...
...AND CARRIED HER AWAY IN HIS CHARIOT.
HELP! RAMA! LAXMANA! HELP!
SOMEONE SAVE ME FROM THIS DEVIL! PLEASE!
JATAYU, THE VULTURE, CAME TO HER HELP.
YOU OLD FOOL! YOU DARED TO FIGHT RAVANA!

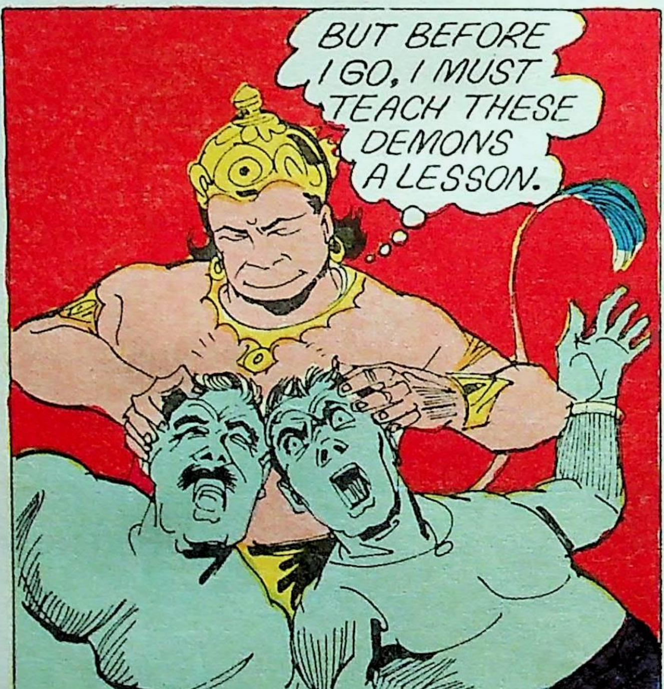

WHEN RAMA REACHED THE SPOT IN SEARCH OF SITA –
I FAILED TO RESCUE SITA. RAVANA HAS TAKEN HER TO THE SOUTH.
POOR JATAYU HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR ME!
TRAVELLING FURTHER SOUTH, RAMA MET SUGREEVA, BROTHER OF THE MONKEY KING VALI AND HIS MINISTER HANUMAN.
I AM ALSO SAD, RAMA. I LIVE IN THE JUNGLE FOR FEAR OF VALI, MY BROTHER, WHO HAS KIDNAPPED MY WIFE. HELP ME TO OVERTHROW VALI AND I WILL HELP YOU.
RAMA KILLED VALI AND SET SUGREEVA ON THE THRONE. VALI'S SON, ANGADA. WAS CROWNED PRINCE.
LATER –
NOW HANUMAN! YOU MUST GO IN SEARCH OF SITA.
HERE, HANUMAN! TAKE THIS RING. IF YOU FIND SITA, SHE WILL RECOGNISE THIS.

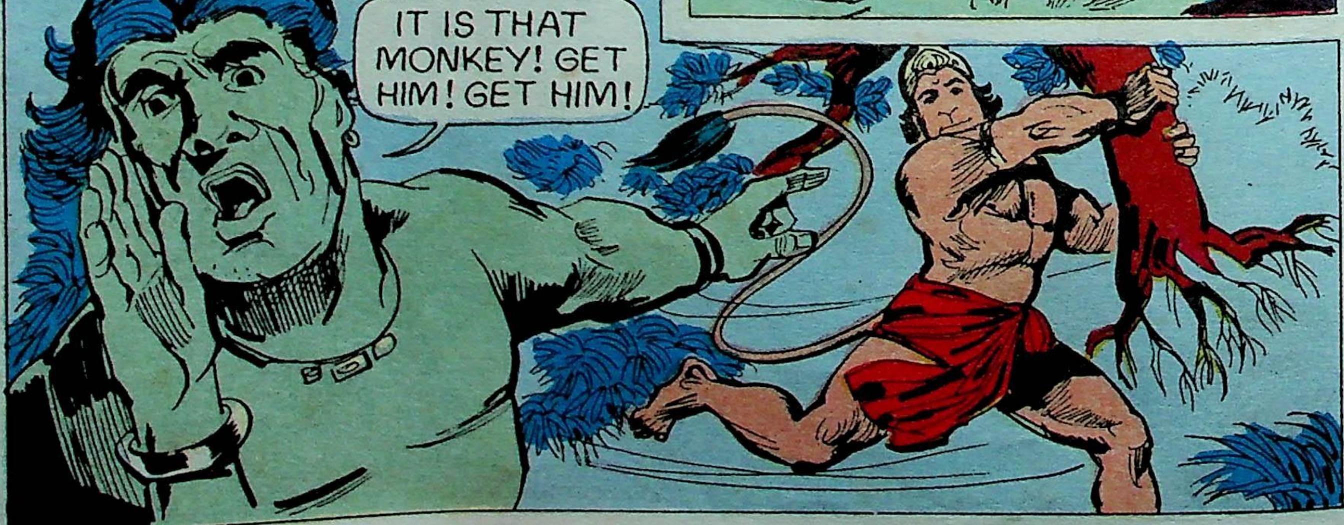

WANDERING FOR DAYS AND WEEKS, THE ARMY OF MONKEYS AND BEARS, LED BY PRINCE ANGADA, ATLAST REACHED THE SOUTHERN SEA COAST.
NOW, YOU ALONE CAN JUMP ACROSS THE SEA, HANUMAN!
HANUMAN LEAPED INTO THE SKY.
IN LANKA –
NOW TO LOOK FOR SITA!
ATLAST, IN A GARDEN –
THERE. THAT MUST BE SITA.

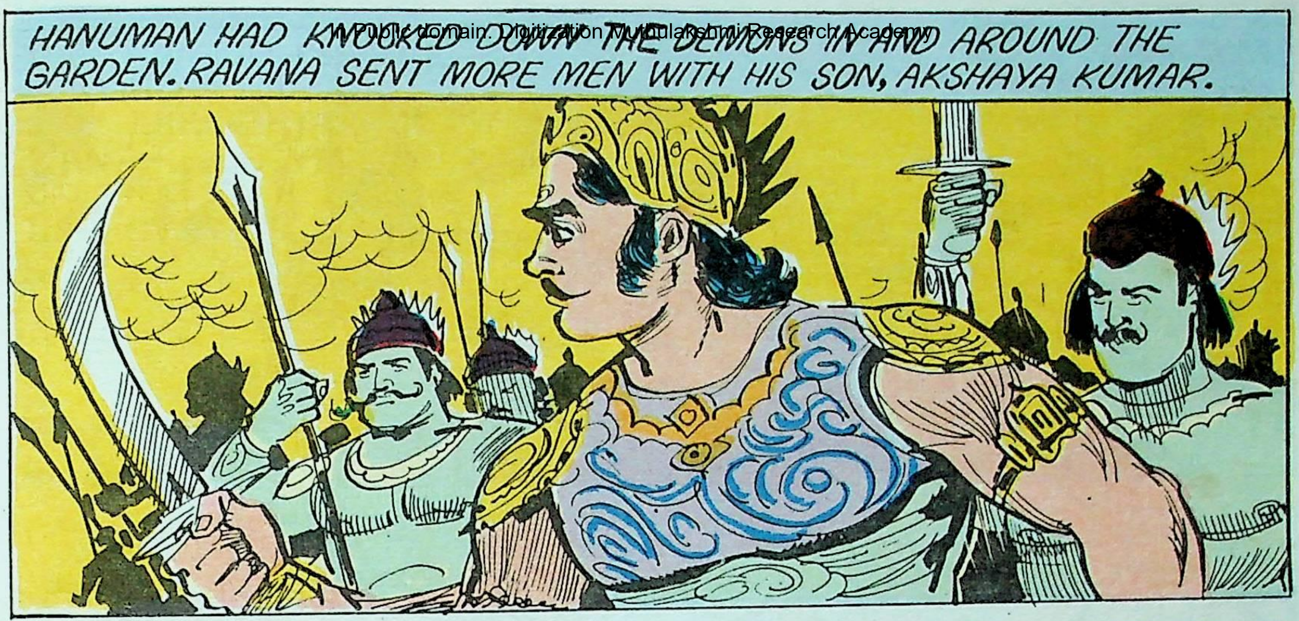

HANUMAN DROPPED RAMA'S RING.

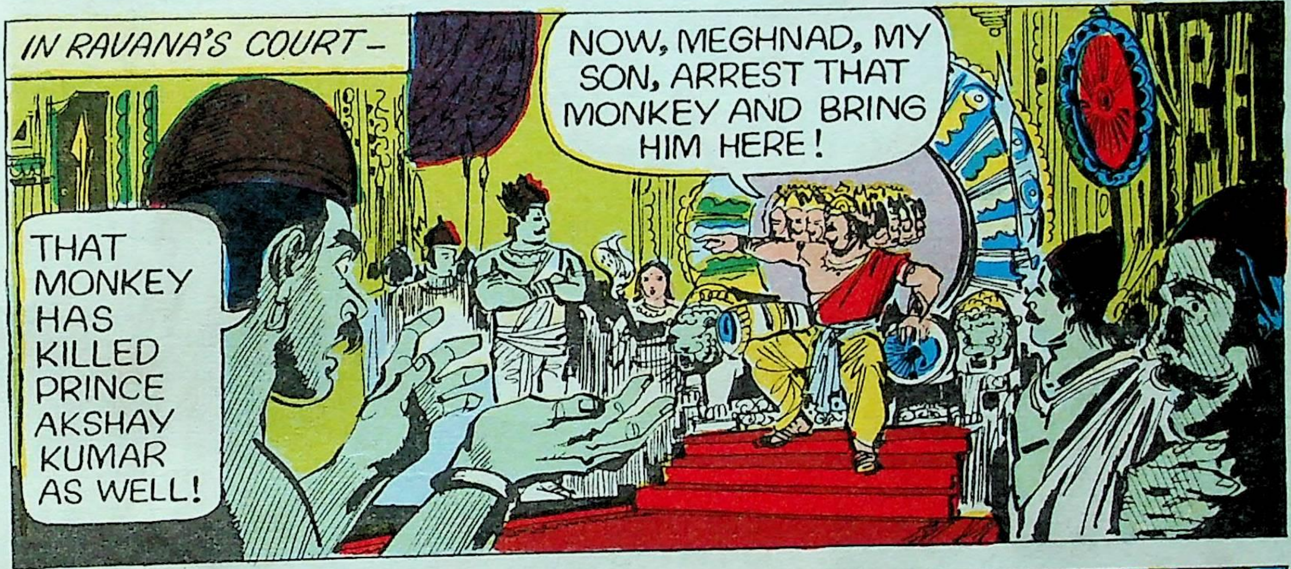

I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT RAMA. I WOULD RATHER KILL MYSELF... RAMA'S RING! HOW DID IT GET HERE!

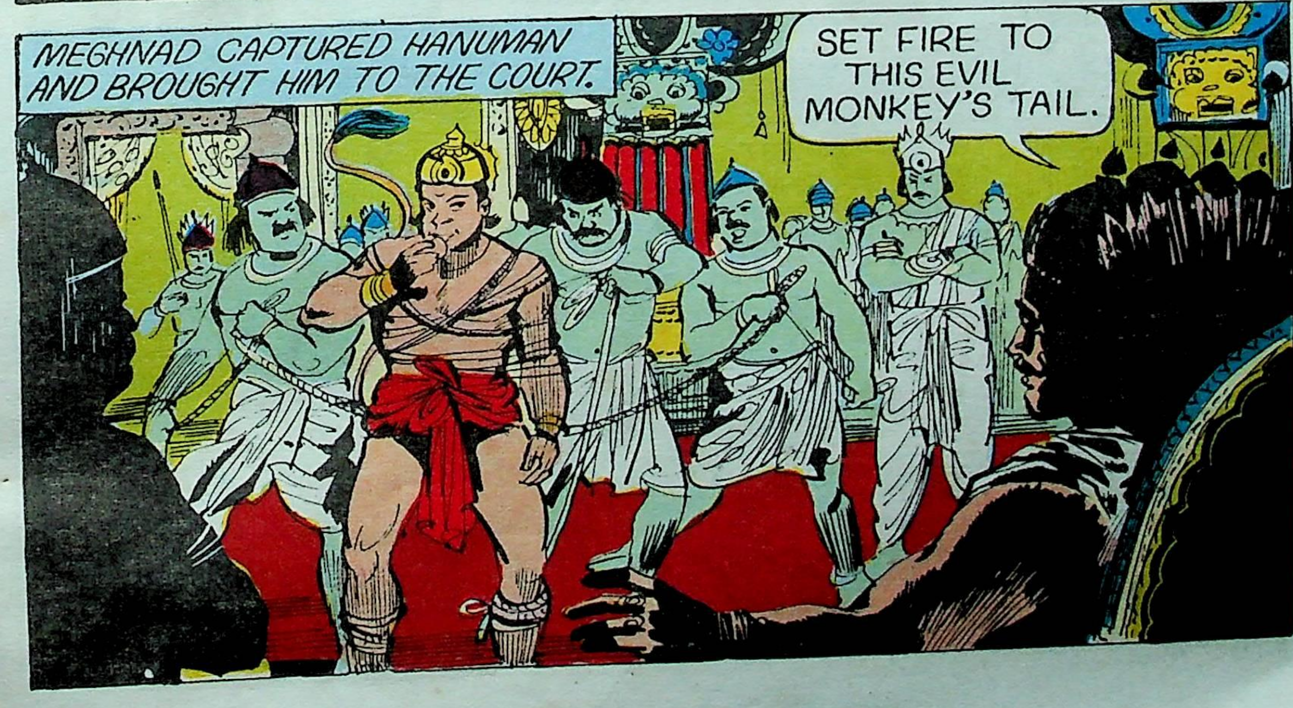

I BROUGHT THIS RING WITH ME. I WILL TELL HIM YOU ARE HERE AND HE WILL SURELY COME AND KILL RAVANA!
HANUMAN JUMPED DOWN.

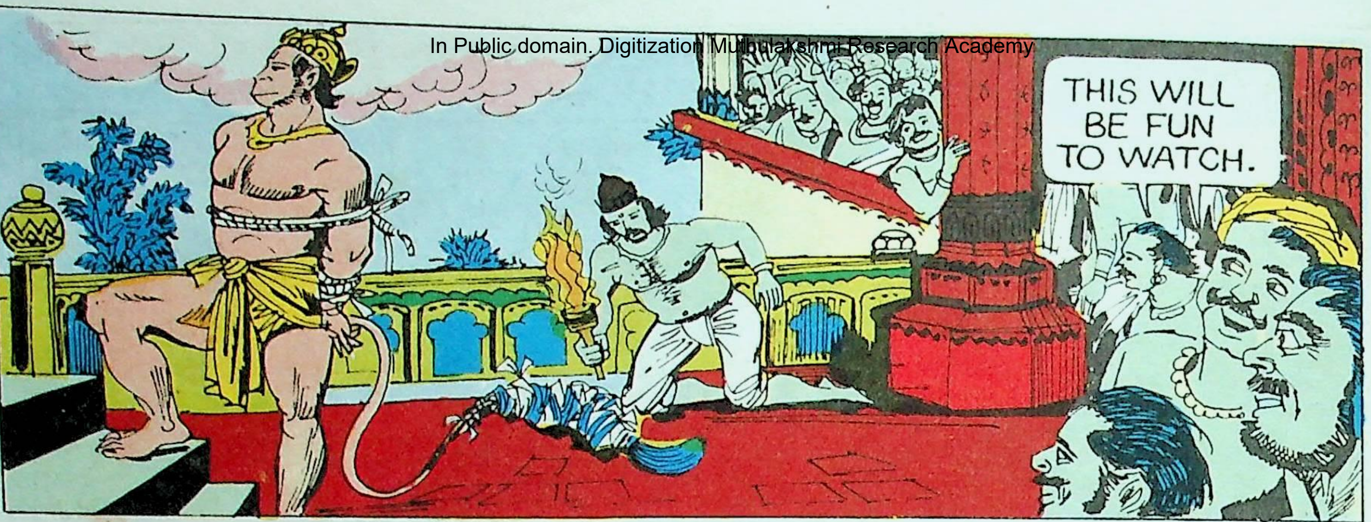

BUT BEFORE I GO, I MUST TEACH THESE DEMONS A LESSON.


IT IS THAT MONKEY! GET HIM! GET HIM!

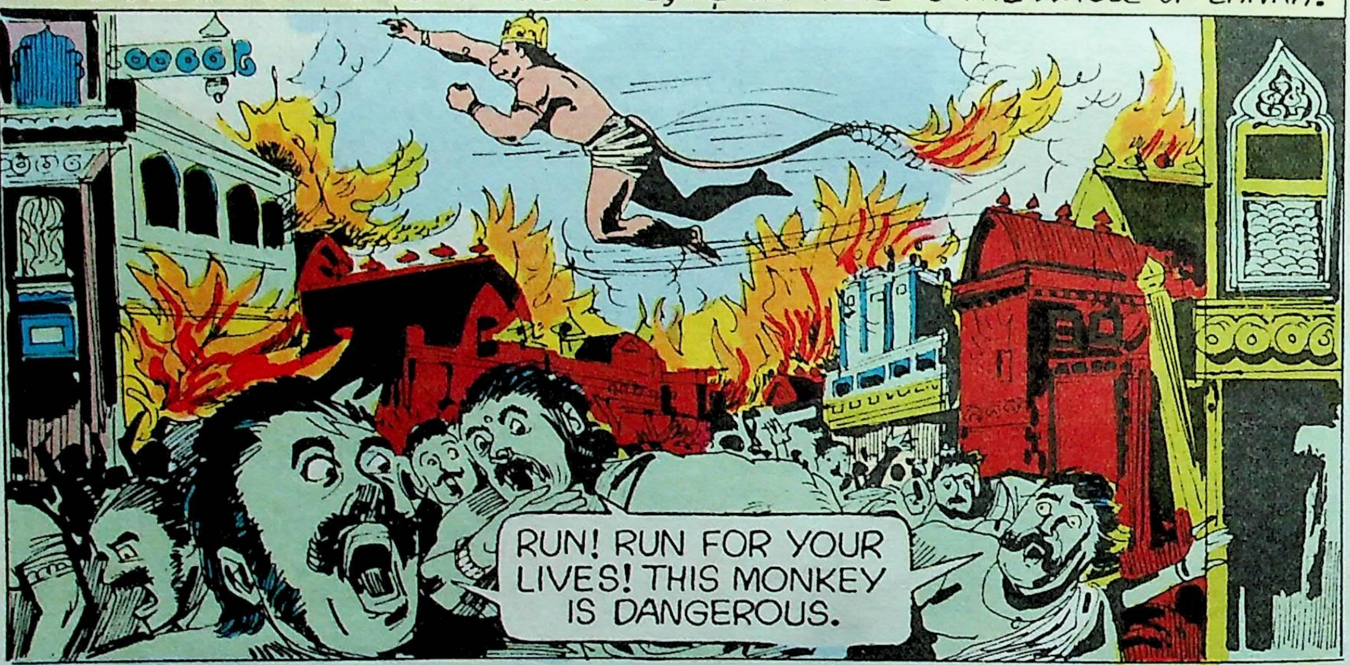

HANUMAN HAD KNOCKED DOWN THE DEMONS IN AND AROUND THE GARDEN. RAVANA SENT MORE MEN WITH HIS SON, AKSHAYA KUMAR.


IN RAVANA'S COURT–
NOW, MEGHNAD, MY SON, ARREST THAT MONKEY AND BRING HIM HERE!
THAT MONKEY HAS KILLED PRINCE AKSHAY KUMAR AS WELL!

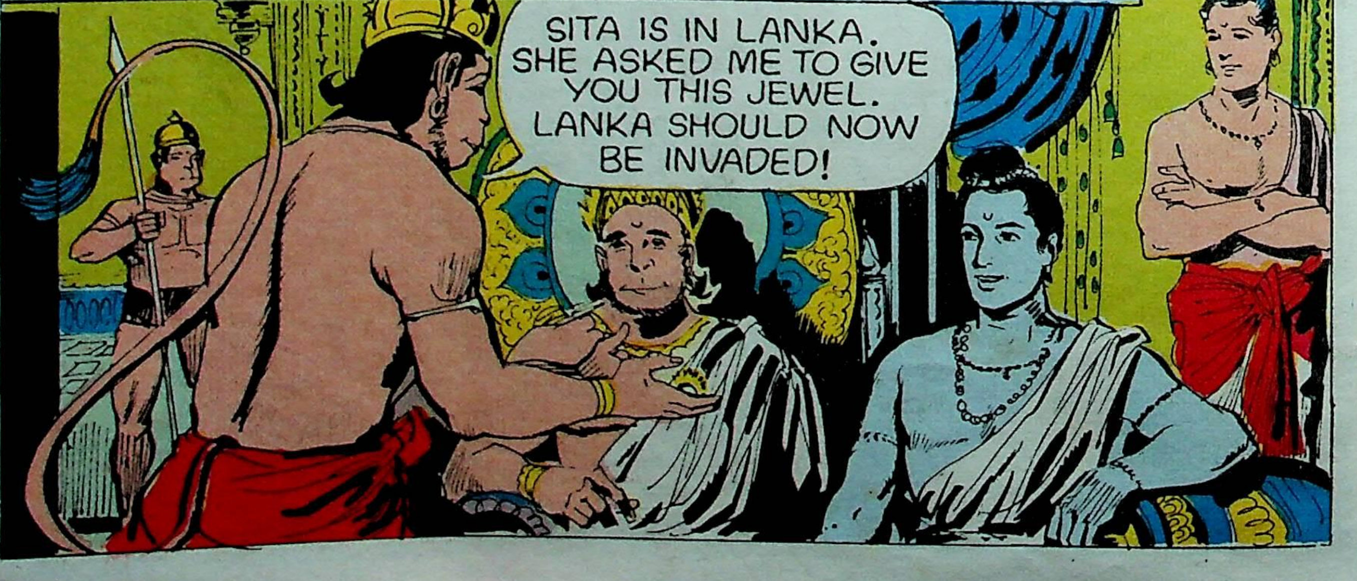

MEGHNAD CAPTURED HANUMAN AND BROUGHT HIM TO THE COURT.
SET FIRE TO THIS EVIL MONKEY'S TAIL.

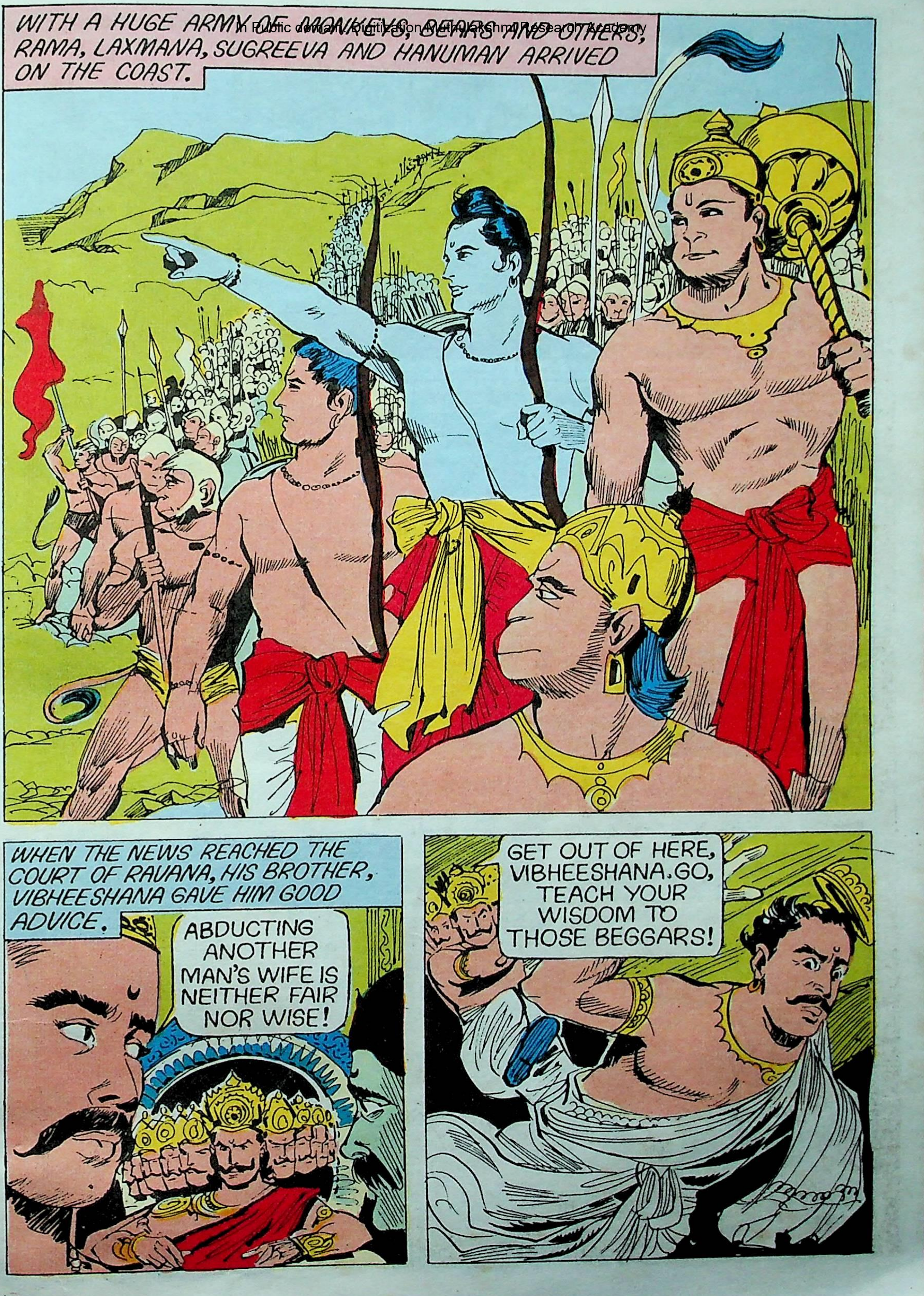

THIS WILL BE FUN TO WATCH.

HANUMAN LOOSENED THE ROPES THAT BOUND HIM. HIS TAIL GREW BIGGER AND BIGGER. WITH HIS LONG TAIL AFIRE, HE SET FIRE TO THE WHOLE OF LANKA.

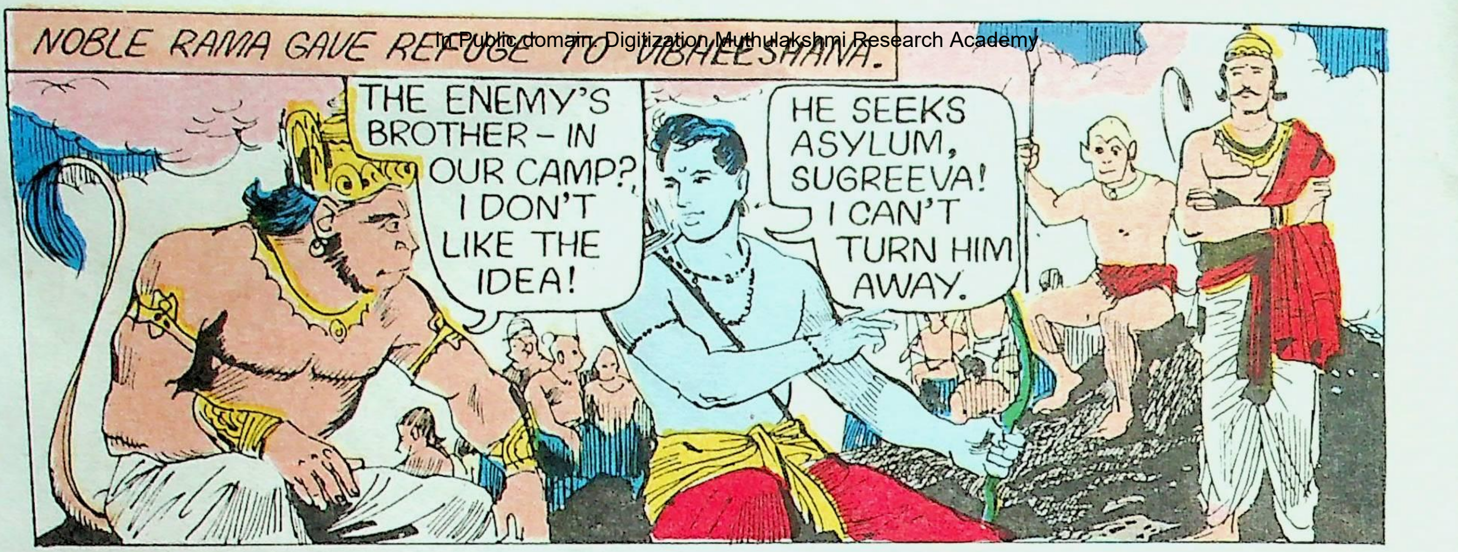

RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES! THIS MONKEY IS DANGEROUS.

HAVING BURNT LANKA, HANUMAN RETURNED TO RAMA'S CAMP.

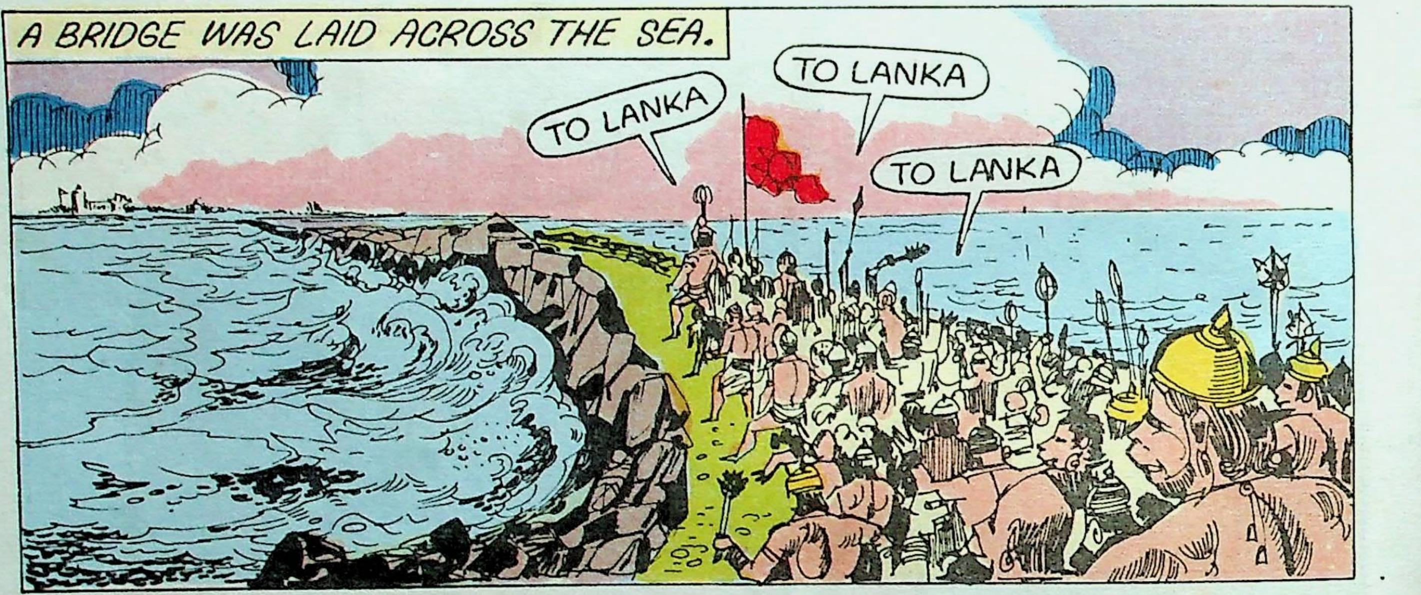

SITA IS IN LANKA. SHE ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU THIS JEWEL. LANKA SHOULD NOW BE INVADED!


WITH A HUGE ARMY OF MONKEYS, BEARS AND OTHERS, RAMA, LAXMANA, SUGREEVA AND HANUMAN ARRIVED ON THE COAST.
WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THE COURT OF RAVANA, HIS BROTHER, VIBHEESHANA GAVE HIM GOOD ADVICE.
ABDUCTING ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE IS NEITHER FAIR NOR WISE!
GET OUT OF HERE, VIBHEESHANA. GO, TEACH YOUR WISDOM TO THOSE BEGGARS!

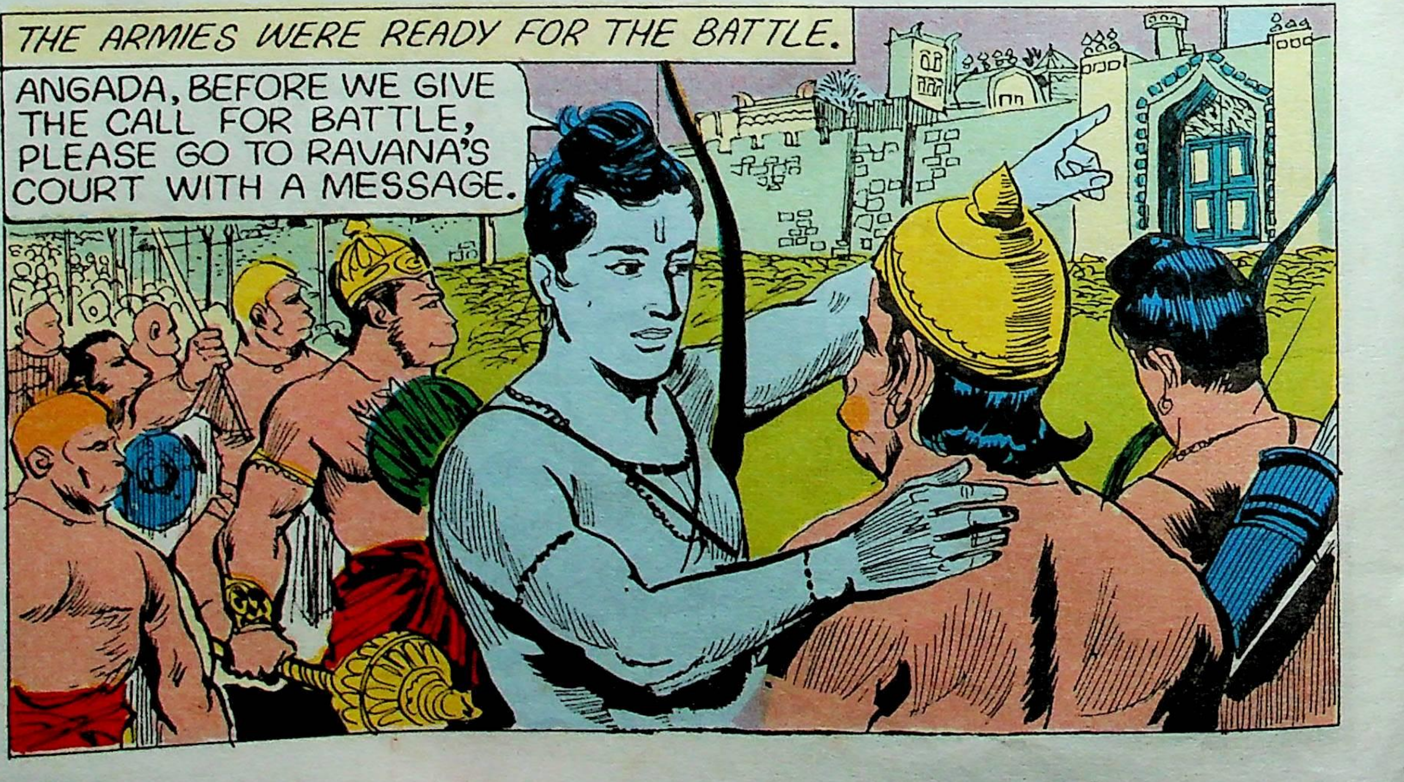
NOBLE RAMA GAVE REFUGE TO VIBHEESHANA.

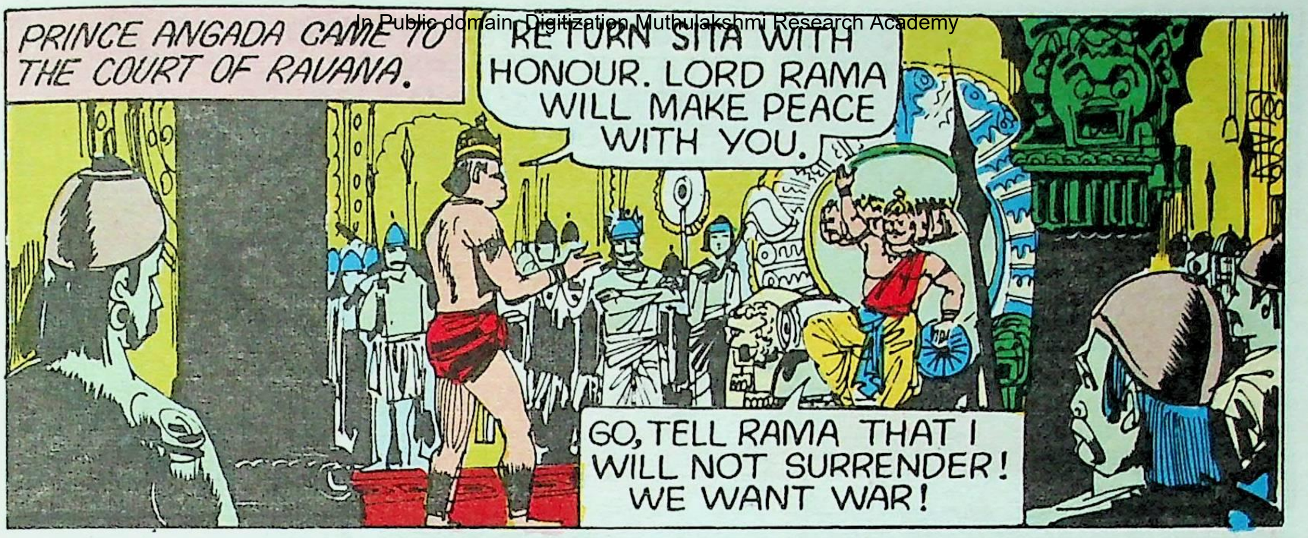

THE ENEMY'S BROTHER-IN OUR CAMP? I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA!
HE SEEKS ASYLUM, SUGREEVA! I CAN'T TURN HIM AWAY.

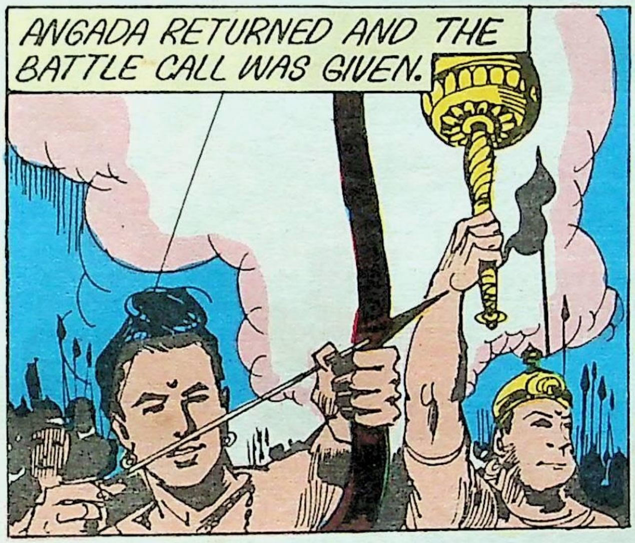
A BRIDGE WAS LAID ACROSS THE SEA.

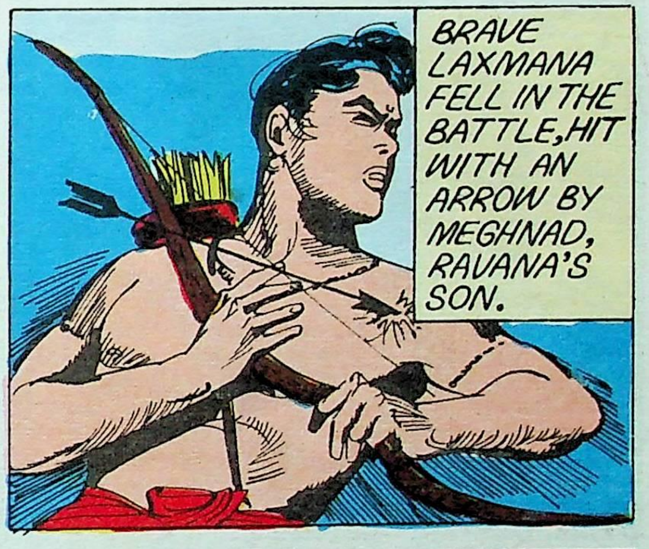

TO LANKA
TO LANKA
TO LANKA

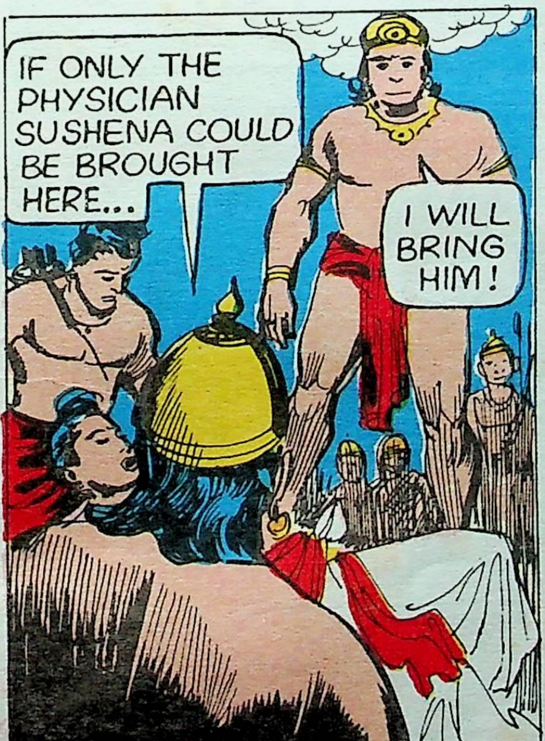
THE ARMIES WERE READY FOR THE BATTLE.

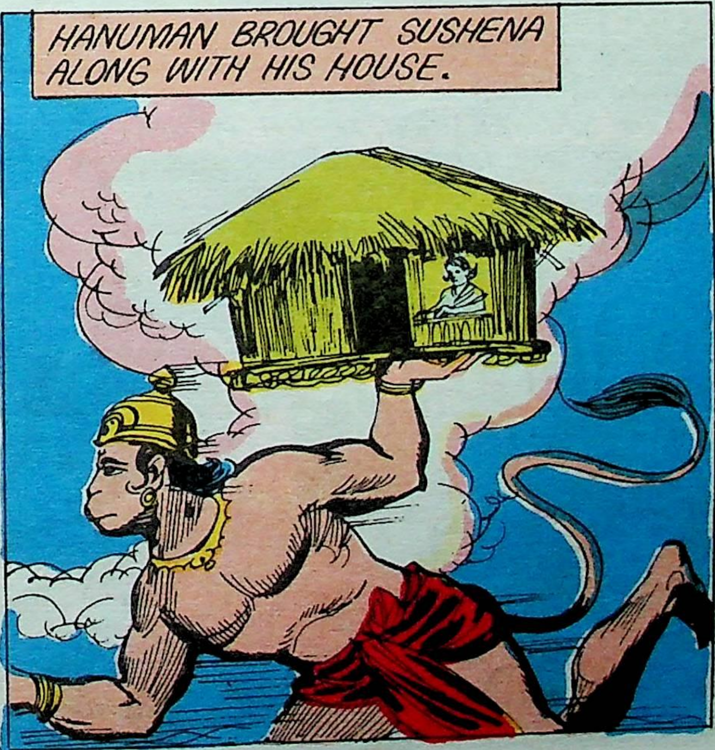

ANGADA, BEFORE WE GIVE THE CALL FOR BATTLE, PLEASE GO TO RAVANA'S COURT WITH A MESSAGE.

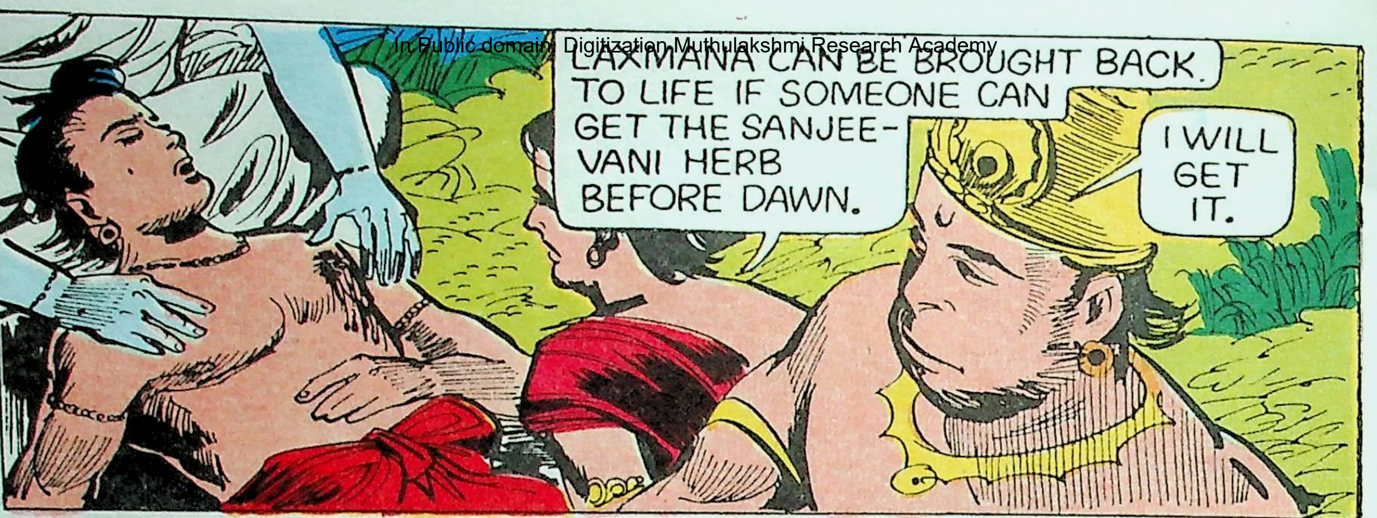

PRINCE ANGADA CAME TO THE COURT OF RAVANA.
RETURN SITA WITH HONOUR. LORD RAMA WILL MAKE PEACE WITH YOU.
GO, TELL RAMA THAT I WILL NOT SURRENDER! WE WANT WAR!


ANGADA RETURNED AND THE BATTLE CALL WAS GIVEN.

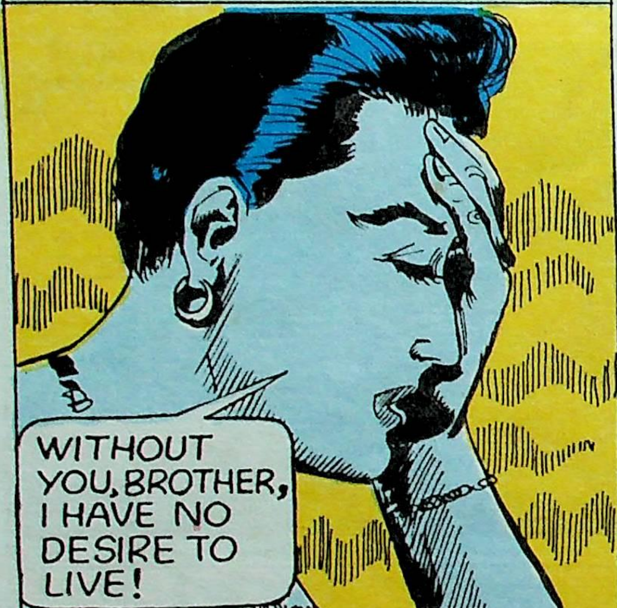

BRAVE LAXMANA FELL IN THE BATTLE, HIT WITH AN ARROW BY MEGHNAD, RAVANA'S SON.

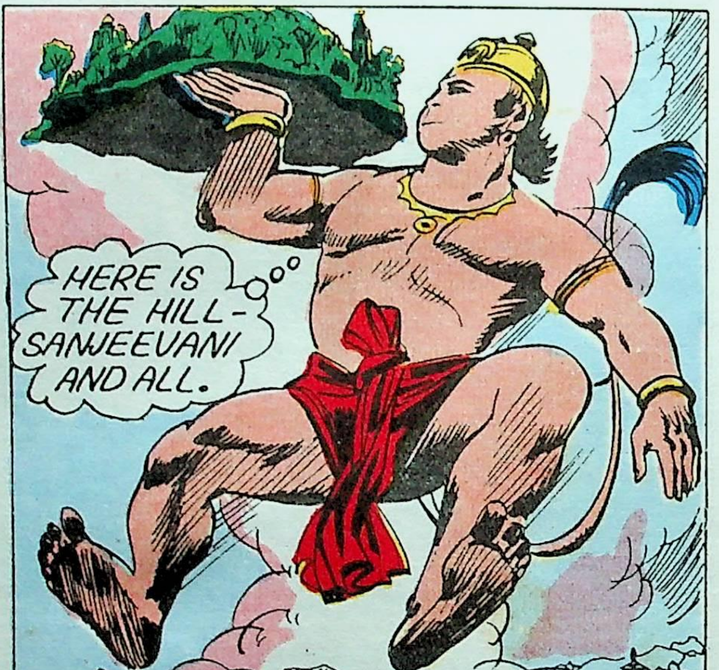

IF ONLY THE PHYSICIAN SUSHENA COULD BE BROUGHT HERE...
I WILL BRING HIM!


HANUMAN BROUGHT SUSHENA ALONG WITH HIS HOUSE.

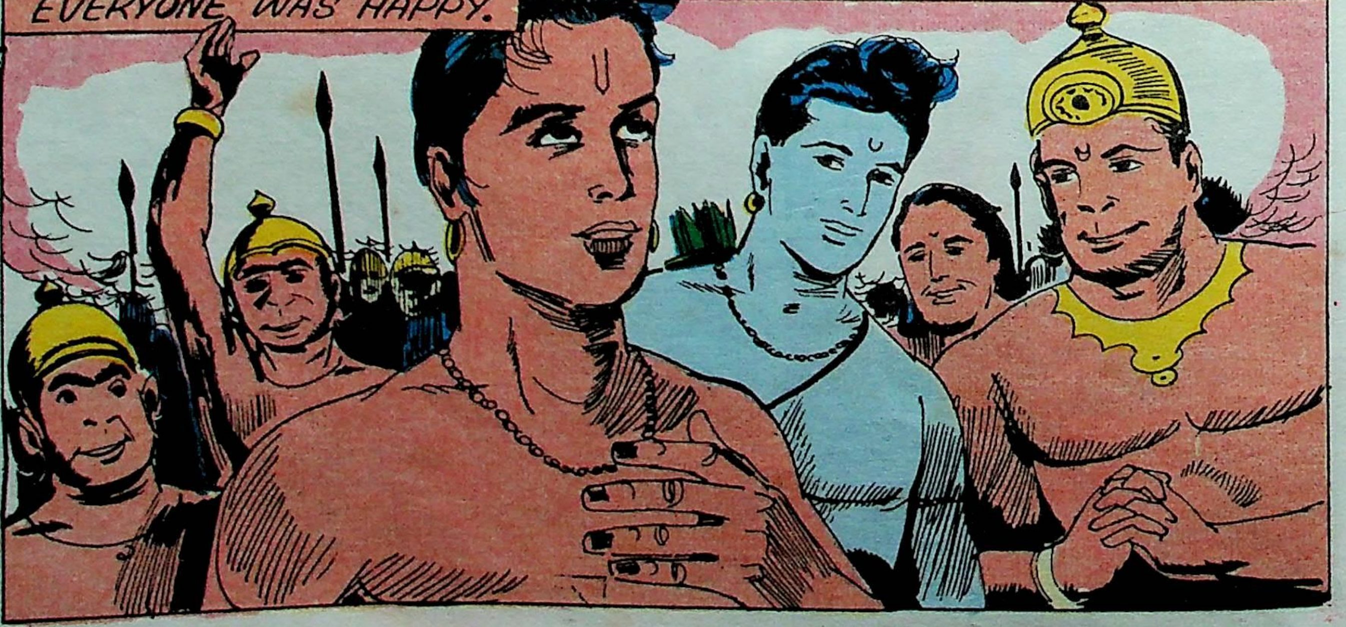

LAXMANA CAN BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE IF SOMEONE CAN GET THE SANJEEVANI HERB BEFORE DAWN.
I WILL GET IT.

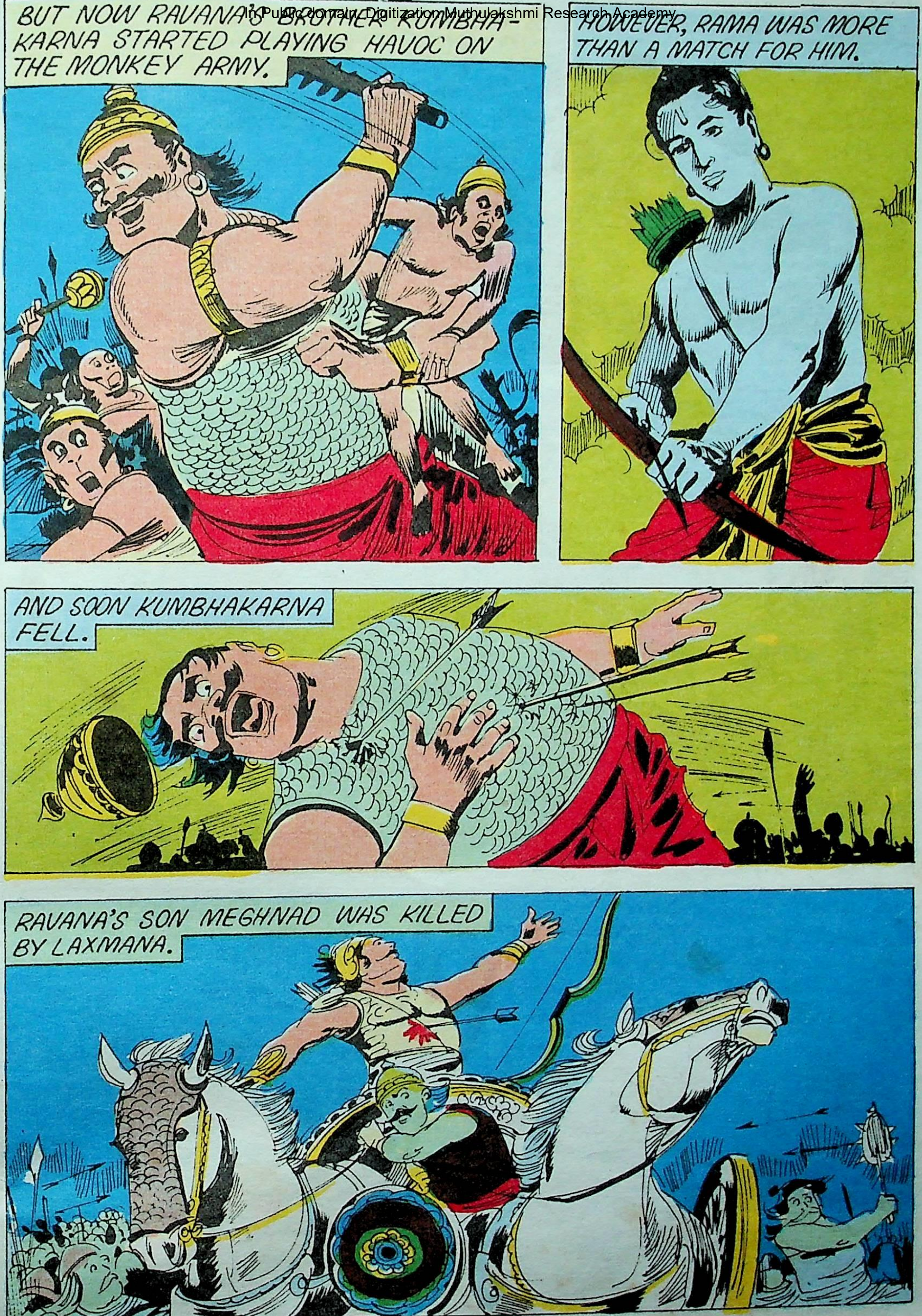
RAMA WAS HEART-BROKEN.


WITHOUT YOU, BROTHER, I HAVE NO DESIRE TO LIVE!

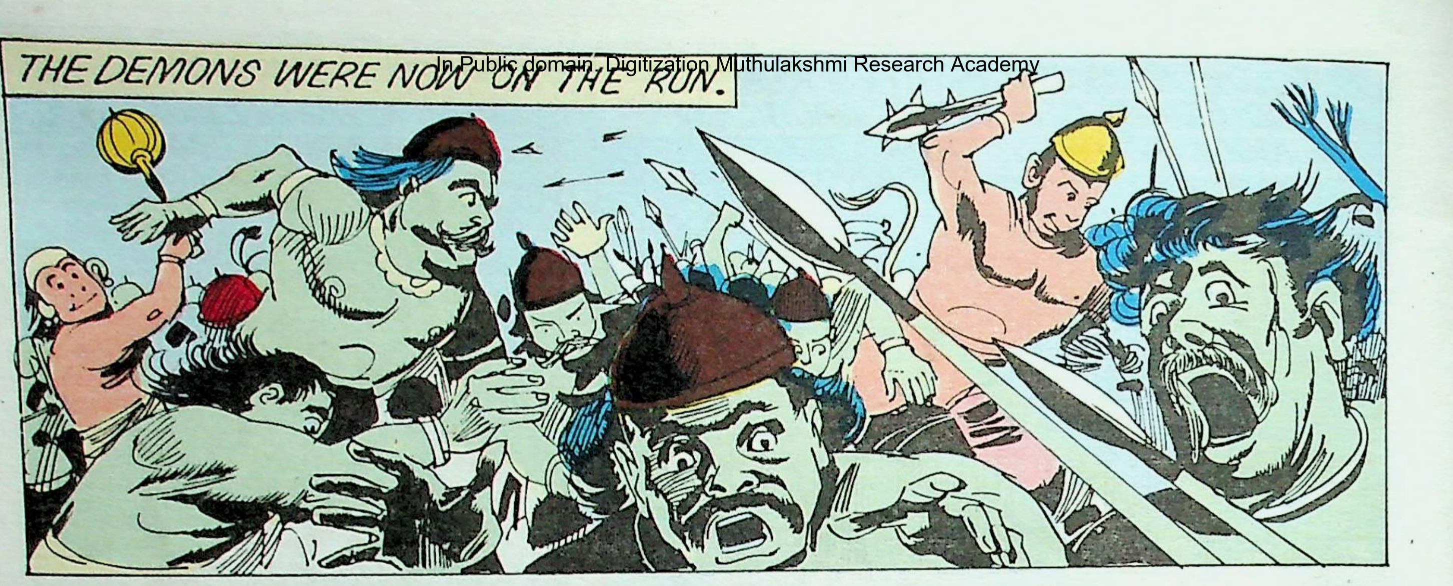

HERE IS THE HILL-SANJEEVANI AND ALL.

THE SANJEEVANI HERB WORKED QUICKLY. LAXMANA SAT UP AND EVERYONE WAS HAPPY.

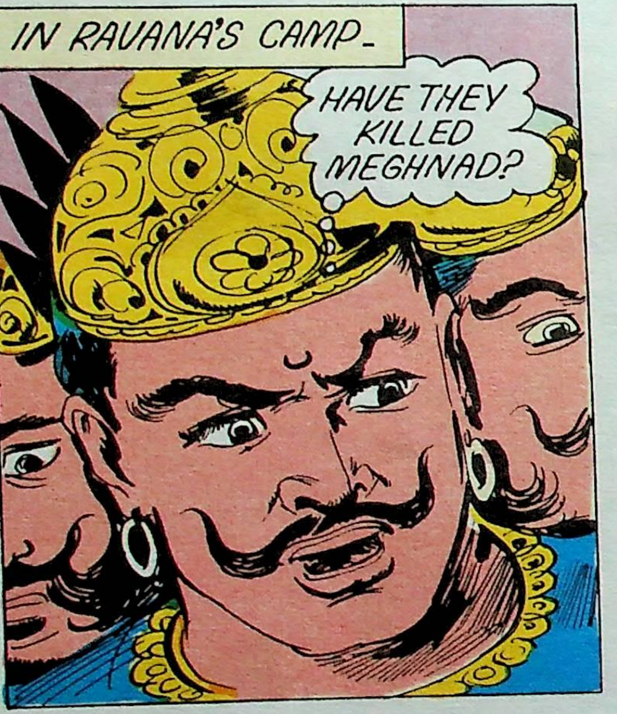



BUT NOW RAVANA'S BROTHER KUMBHAKARNA STARTED PLAYING HAVOC ON THE MONKEY ARMY.
HOWEVER, RAMA WAS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR HIM.
AND SOON KUMBHAKARNA FELL.
RAVANA'S SON MEGHNAD WAS KILLED BY LAXMANA.

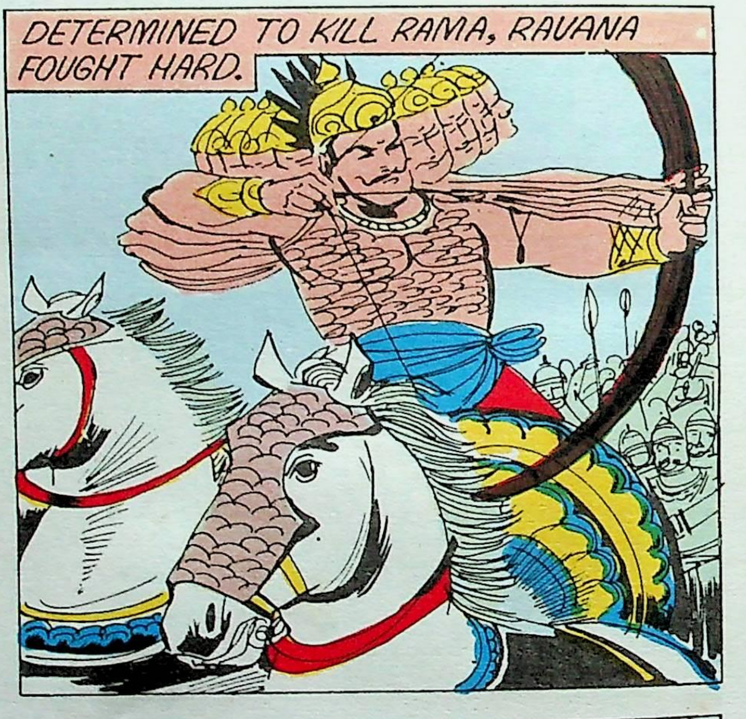
THE DEMONS WERE NOW ON THE RUN.



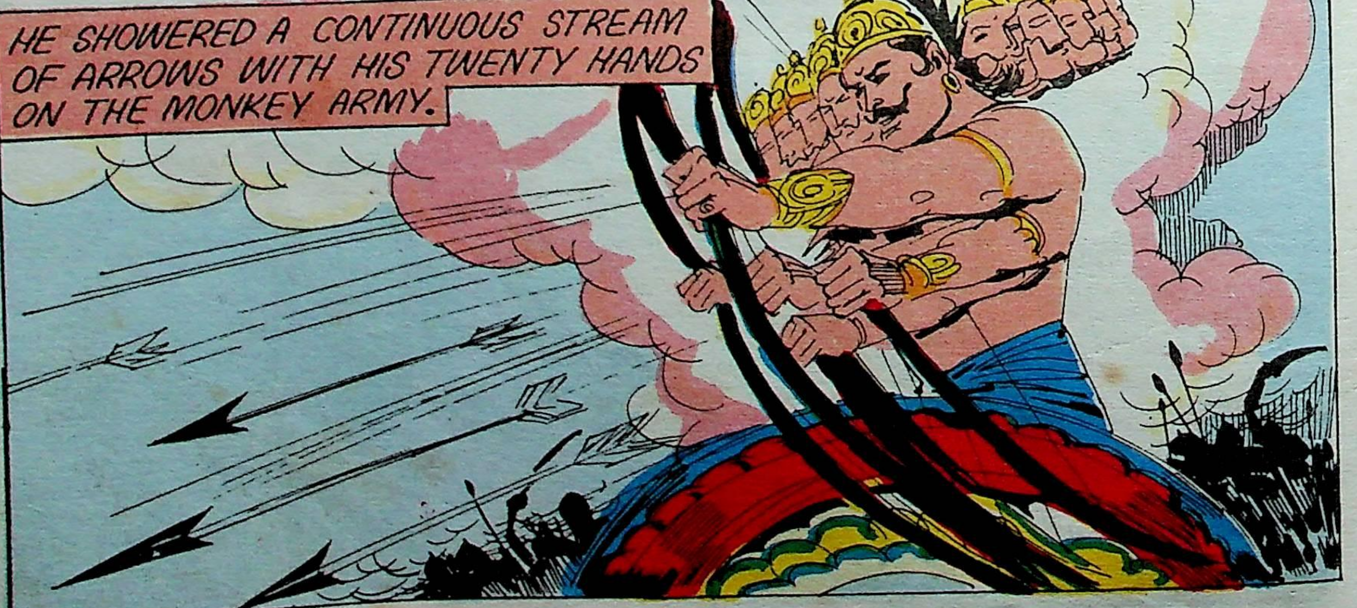
IN RAVANA'S CAMP–

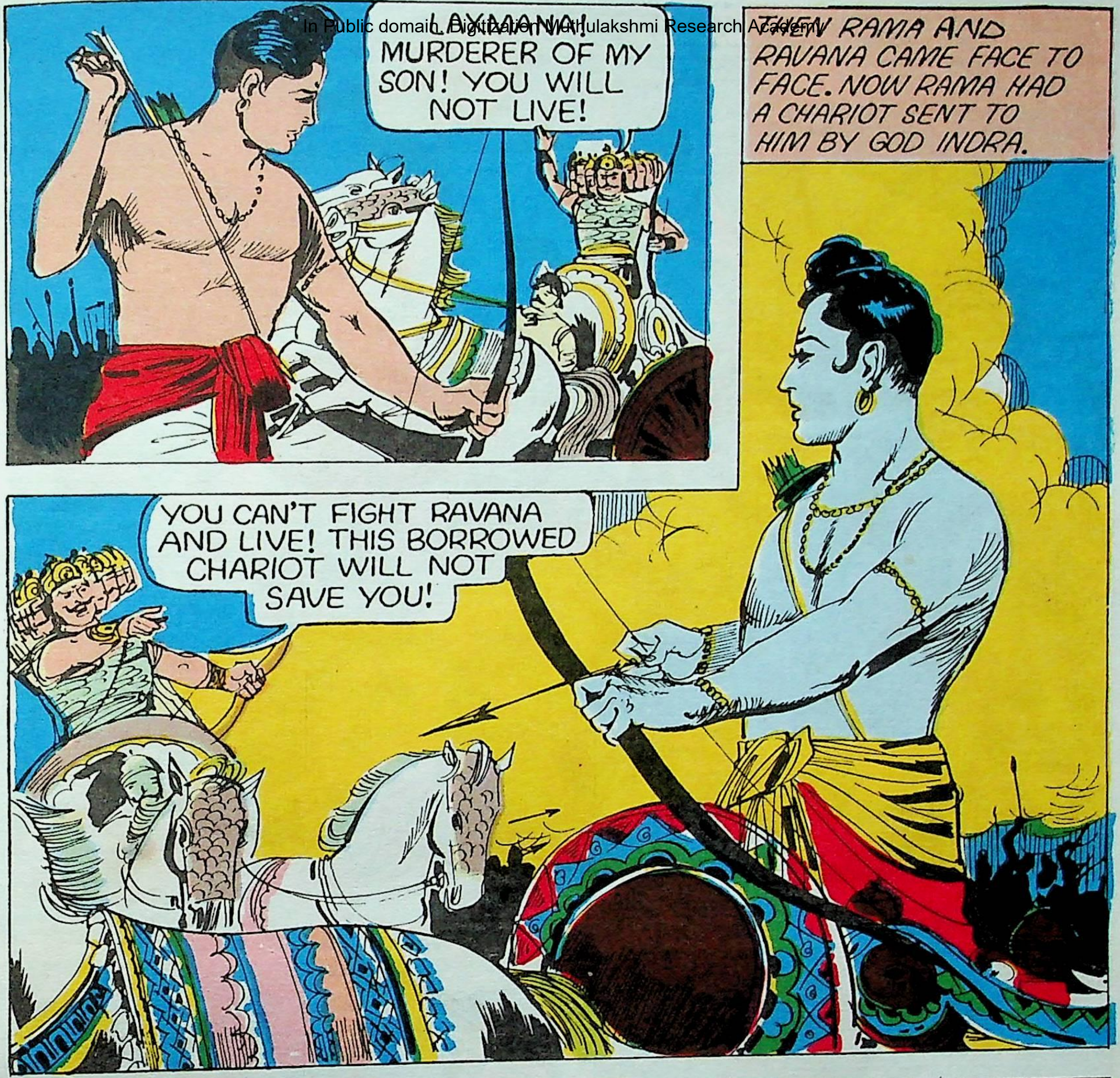

HAVE THEY KILLED MEGHNAD?

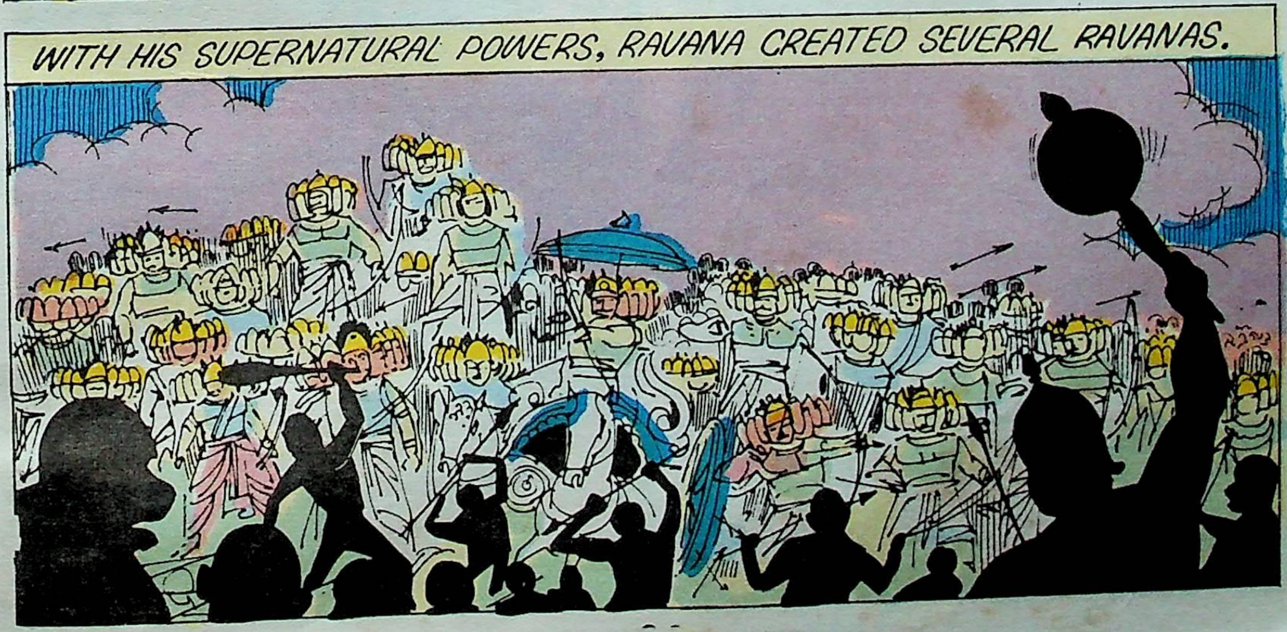
DETERMINED TO KILL RAMA, RAVANA FOUGHT HARD.

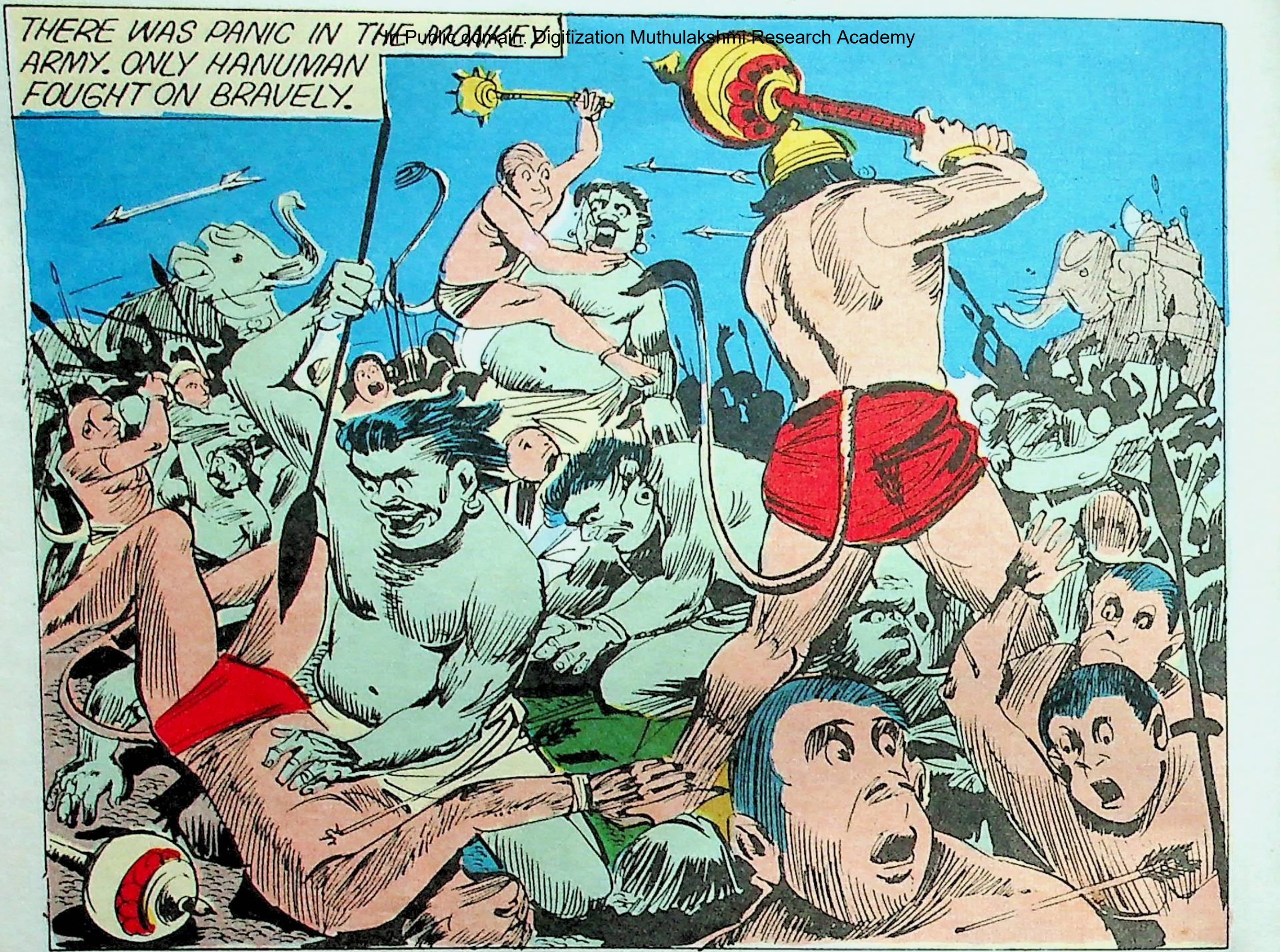


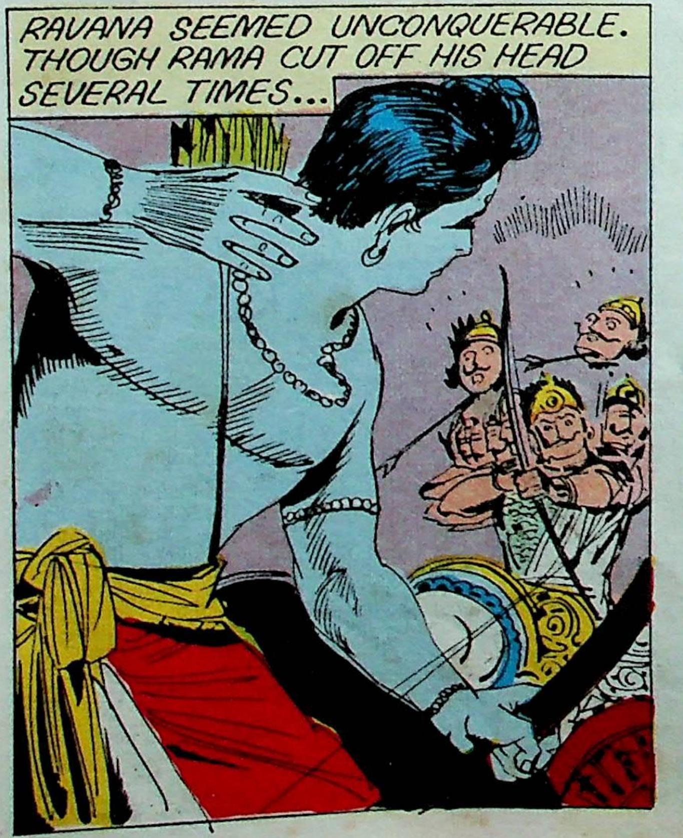
HE SHOWERED A CONTINUOUS STREAM OF ARROWS WITH HIS TWENTY HANDS ON THE MONKEY ARMY.

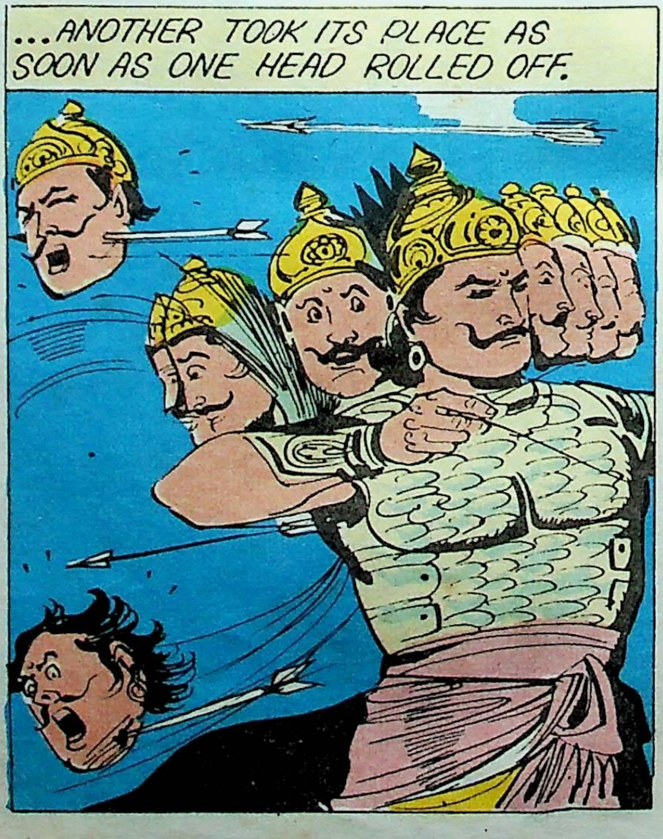


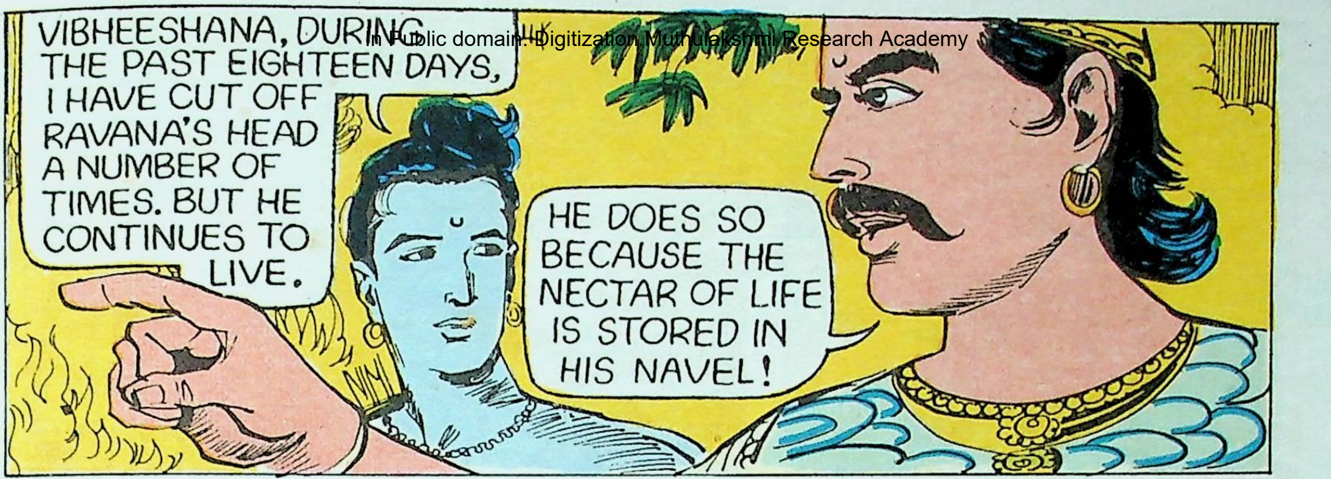

LAXMANA! MURDERER OF MY SON! YOU WILL NOT LIVE!
THEN RAMA AND RAVANA CAME FACE TO FACE. NOW RAMA HAD A CHARIOT SENT TO HIM BY GOD INDRA.
YOU CAN'T FIGHT RAVANA AND LIVE! THIS BORROWED CHARIOT WILL NOT SAVE YOU!

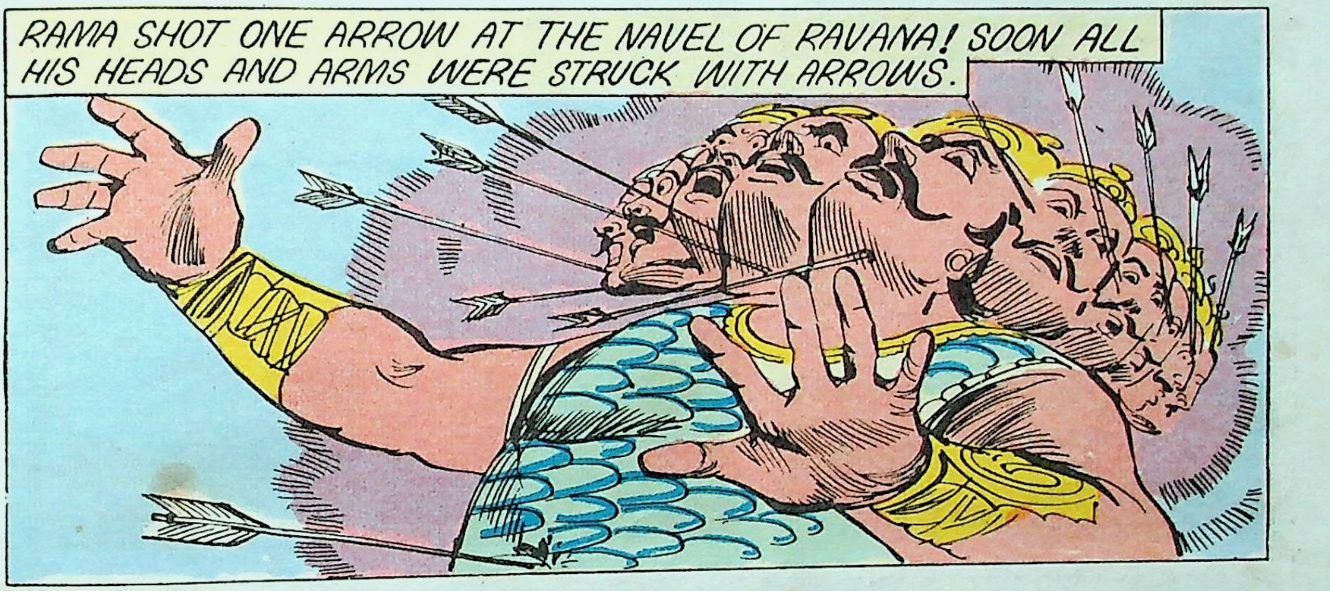

WITH HIS SUPERNATURAL POWERS, RAVANA CREATED SEVERAL RAVANAS.

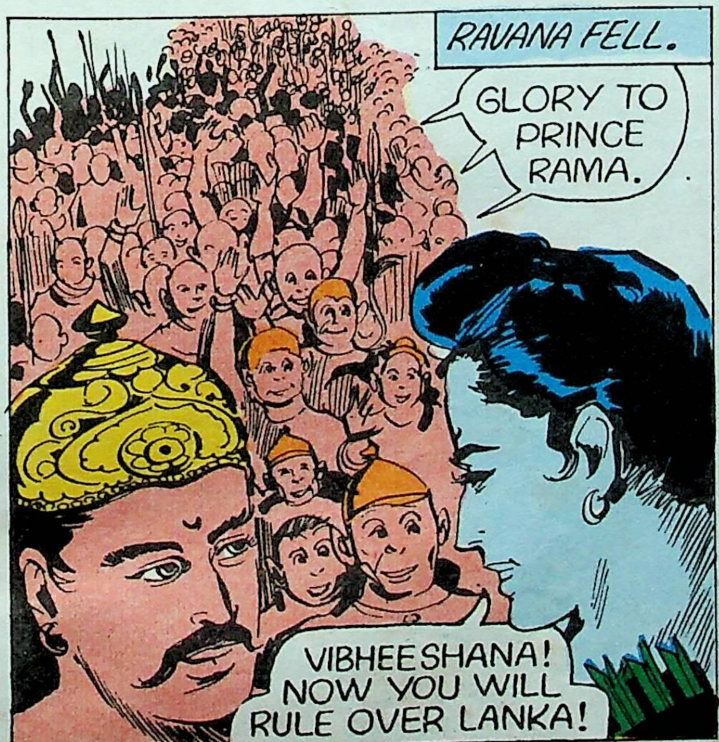

THERE WAS PANIC IN THE MONKEY ARMY. ONLY HANUMAN FOUGHT ON BRAVELY.

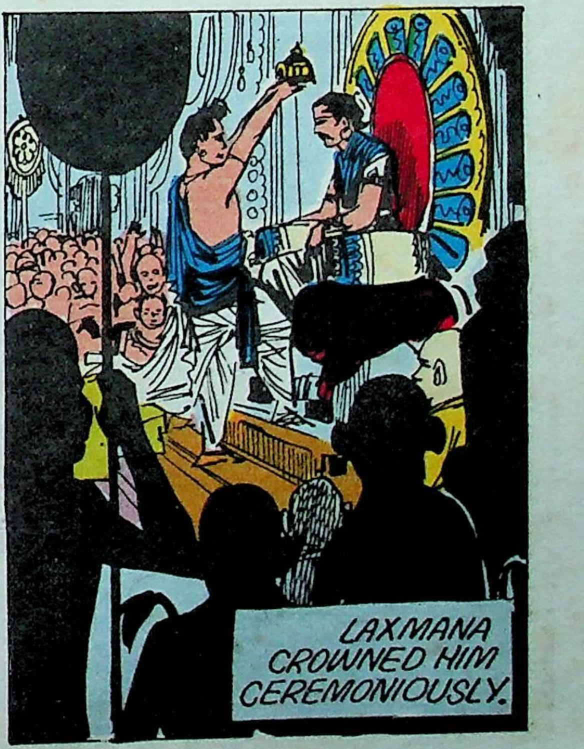

RAVANA SEEMED UNCONQUERABLE. THOUGH RAMA CUT OFF HIS HEAD SEVERAL TIMES...

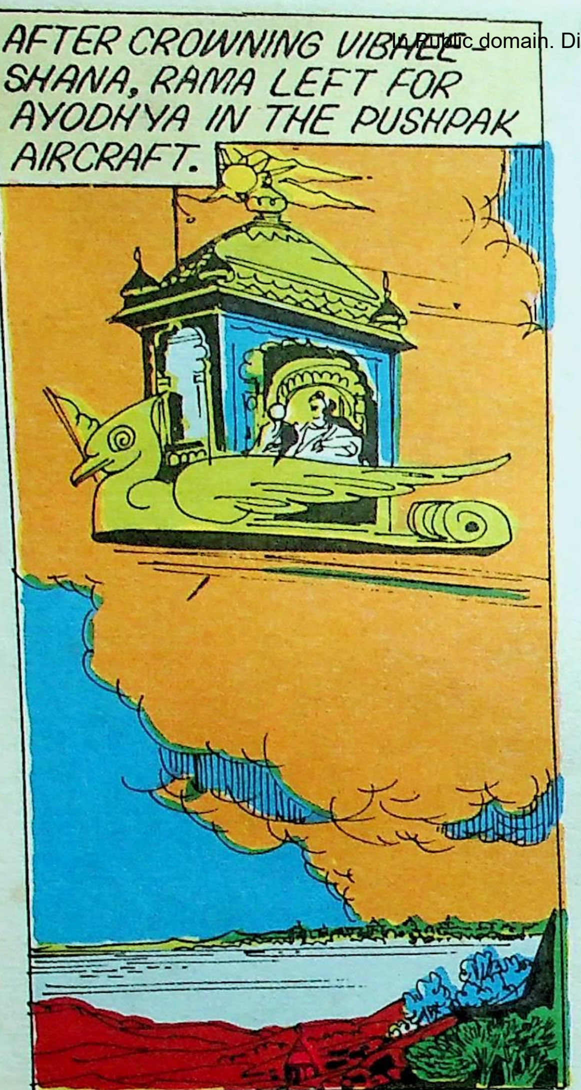

...ANOTHER TOOK ITS PLACE AS SOON AS ONE HEAD ROLLED OFF.

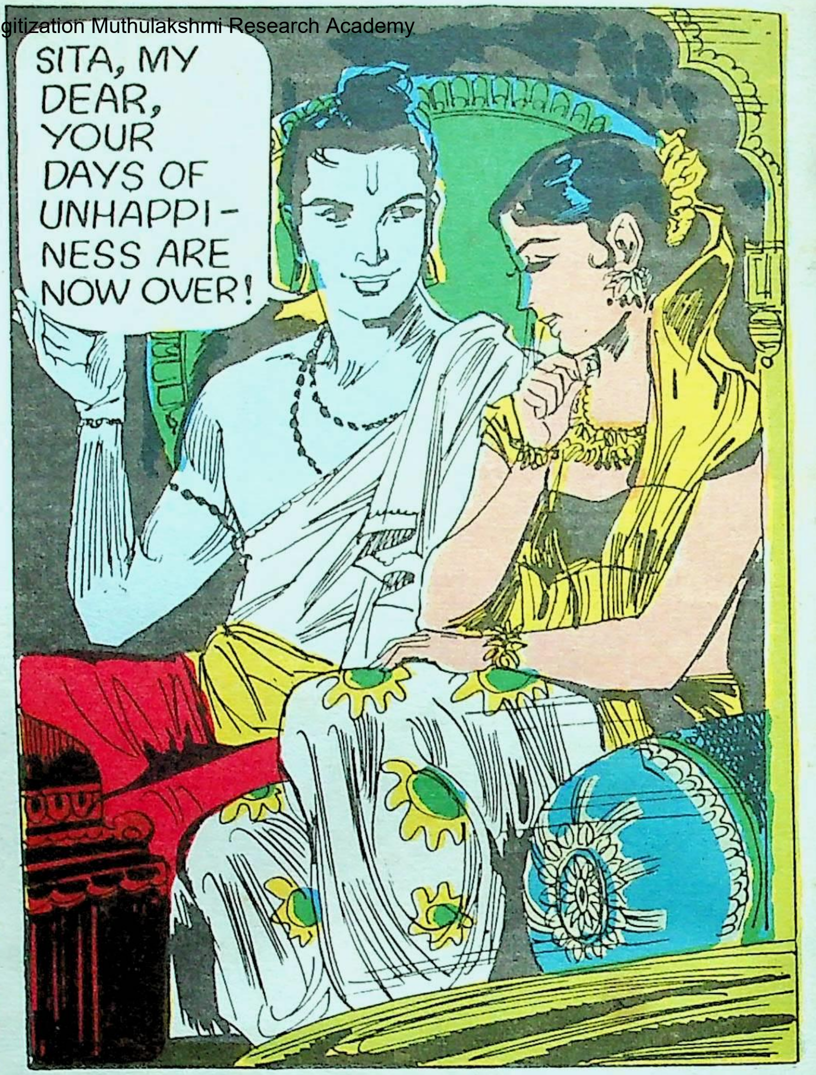

VIBHEESHANA, DURING THE PAST EIGHTEEN DAYS, I HAVE CUT OFF RAVANA'S HEAD A NUMBER OF TIMES. BUT HE CONTINUES TO LIVE.
HE DOES SO BECAUSE THE NECTAR OF LIFE IS STORED IN HIS NAVEL!

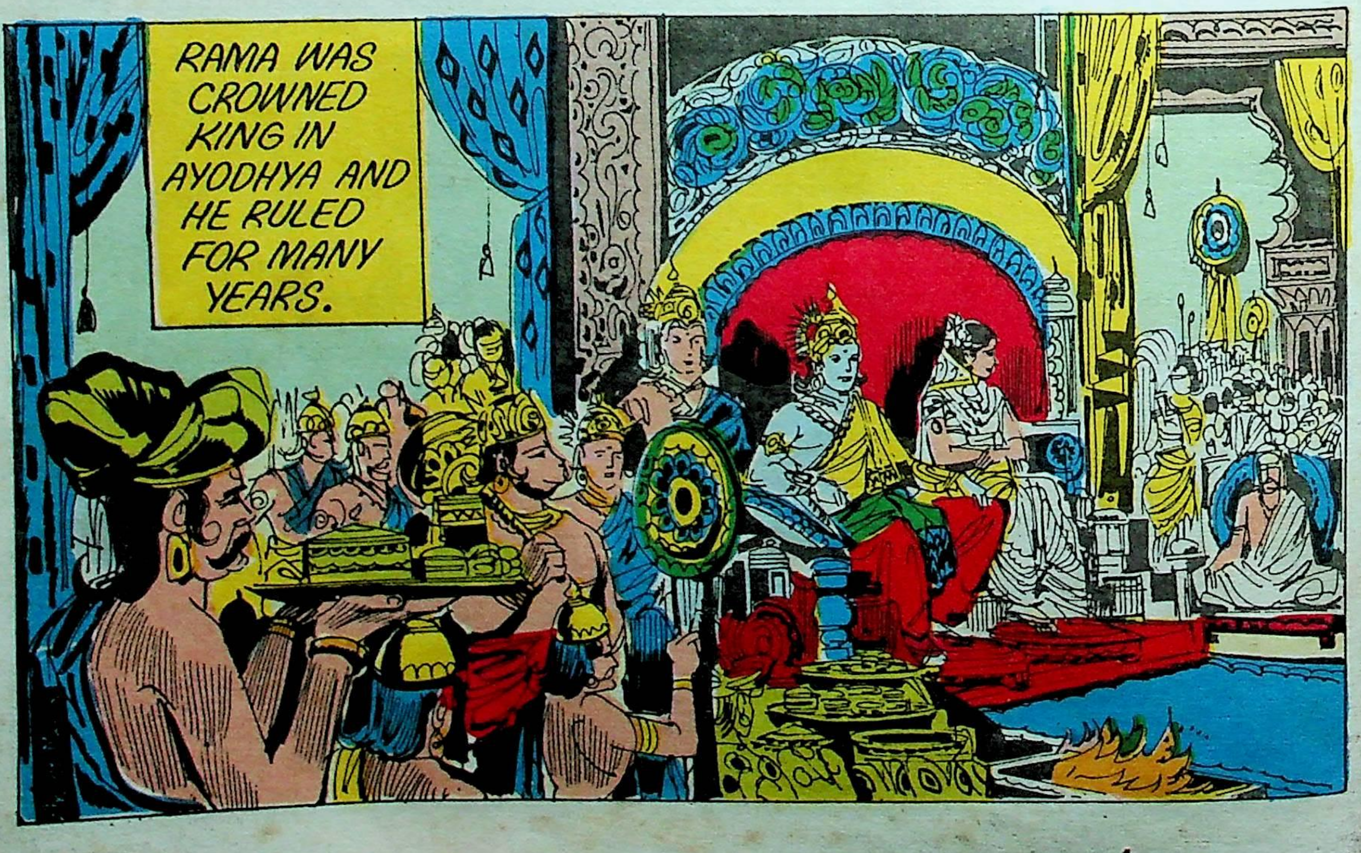

RAMA SHOT ONE ARROW AT THE NAVEL OF RAVANA! SOON ALL HIS HEADS AND ARMS WERE STRUCK WITH ARROWS.


RAVANA FELL.
GLORY TO PRINCE RAMA.
VIBHEESHANA! NOW YOU WILL RULE OVER LANKA!


LAXMANA CROWNED HIM CEREMONIOUSLY.


AFTER CROWNING VIBHEE-SHANA, RAMA LEFT FOR AYODHYA IN THE PUSHPAK AIRCRAFT.


SITA, MY DEAR, YOUR DAYS OF UNHAPPINESS ARE NOW OVER!


RAMA WAS CROWNED KING IN AYODHYA AND HE RULED FOR MANY YEARS.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

KRISHNA

RETOLD FROM THE BHAGAWAT PURAN

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The route to your roots

KRISHNA

Throwing his aged father into prison, Kamsa occupied the throne of Mathura. Commanding a formidable army he thought he was unstoppable. The threat to his power came from an unexpected quarter œ from a cowherd boy who was rumoured to be his cousin Devaki's eighth child, Krishna. Moreover there was a divine prophecy that Kamsa would meet his end at the hands of the eighth child of Devaki.

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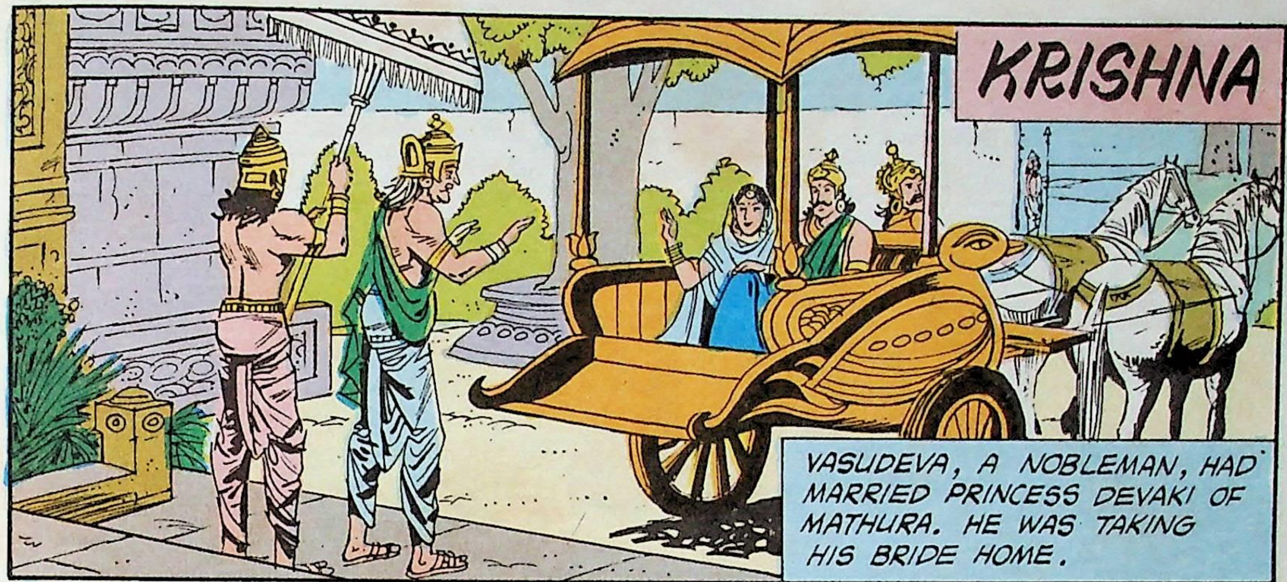
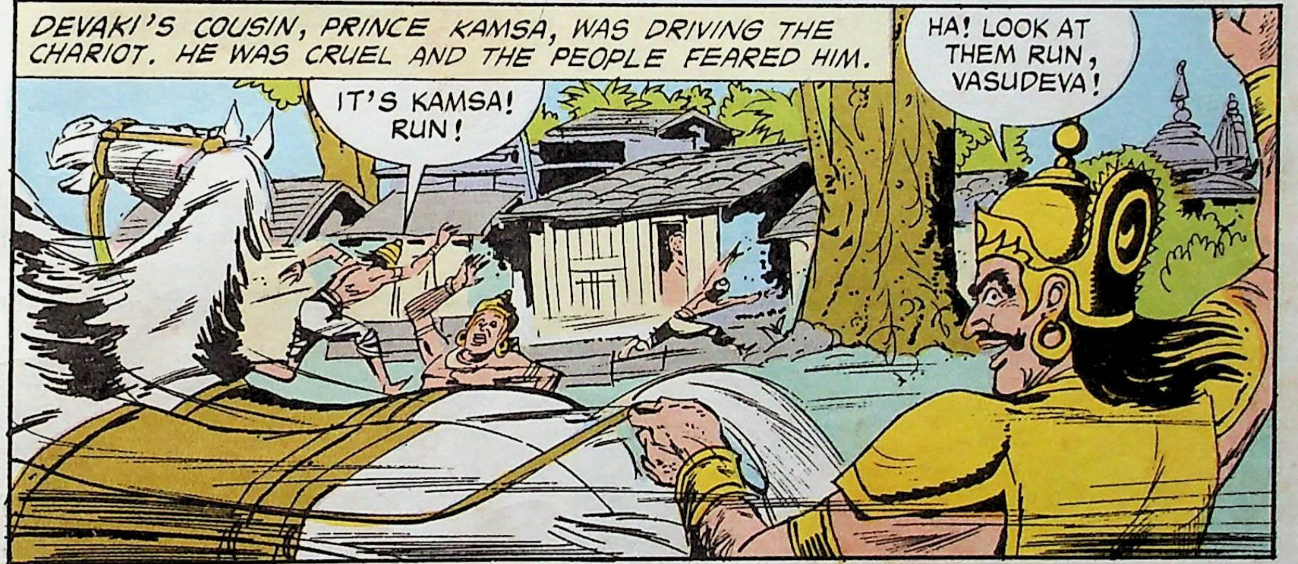
KRISHNA

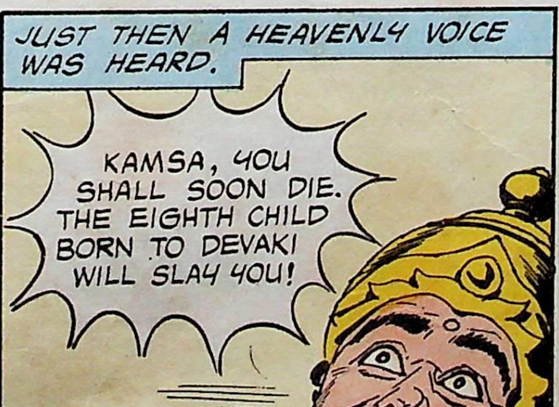


VASUDEVA, A NOBLEMAN, HAD MARRIED PRINCESS DEVAKI OF MATHURA. HE WAS TAKING HIS BRIDE HOME.



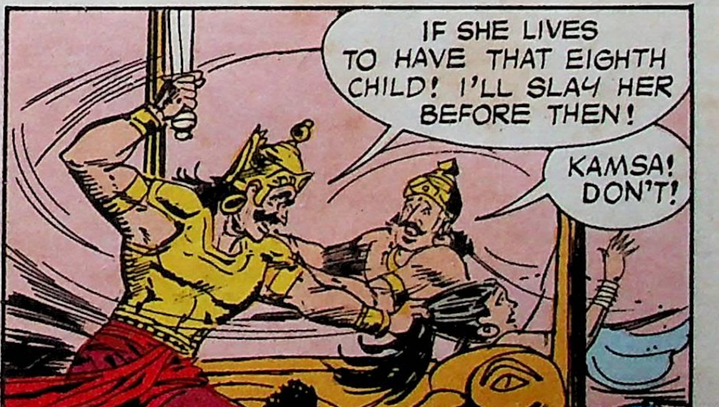
DEVAKI'S COUSIN, PRINCE KAMSA, WAS DRIVING THE CHARIOT. HE WAS CRUEL AND THE PEOPLE FEARED HIM.

IT'S KAMSA! RUN!
HA! LOOK AT THEM RUN, VASUDEVA!

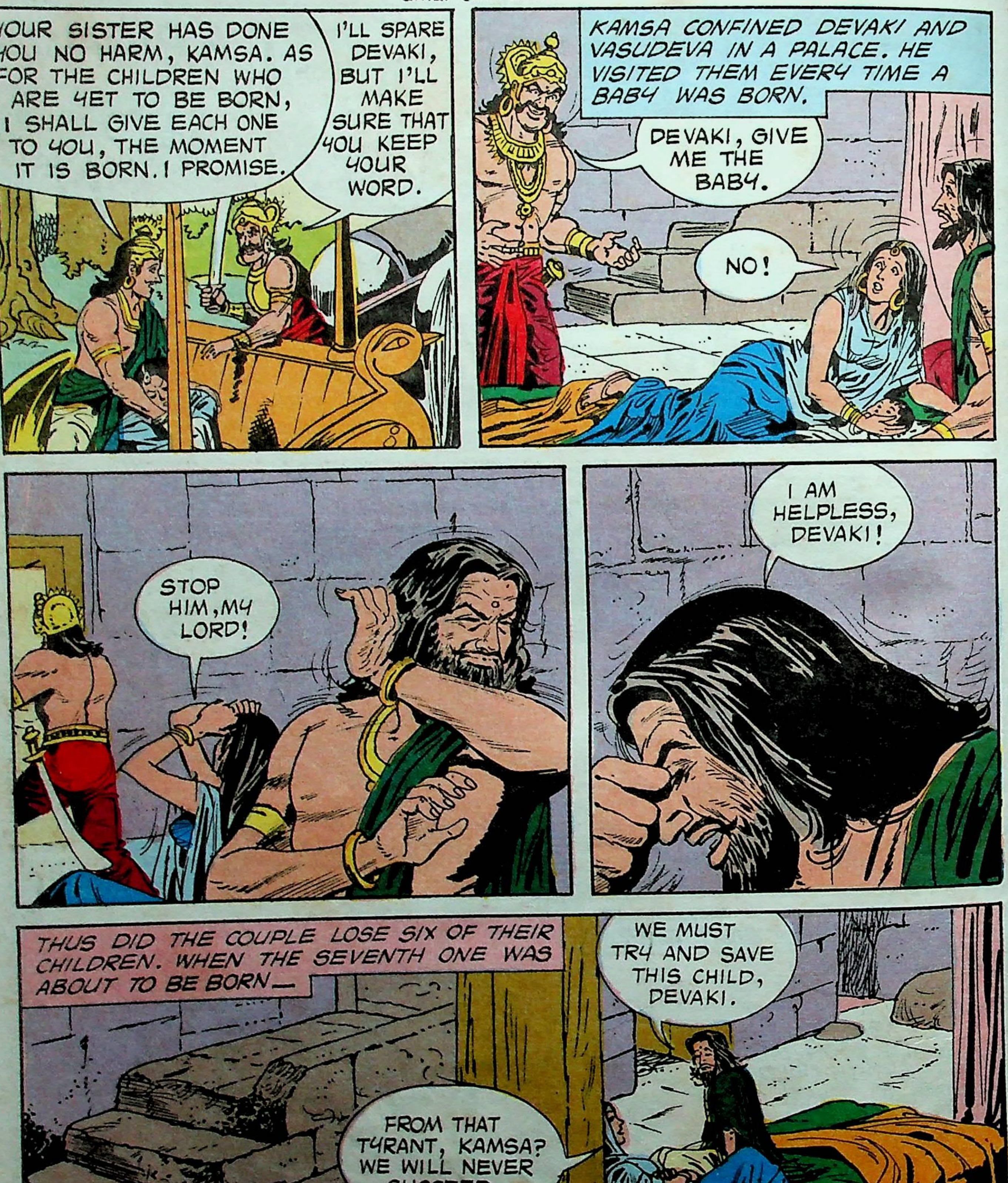


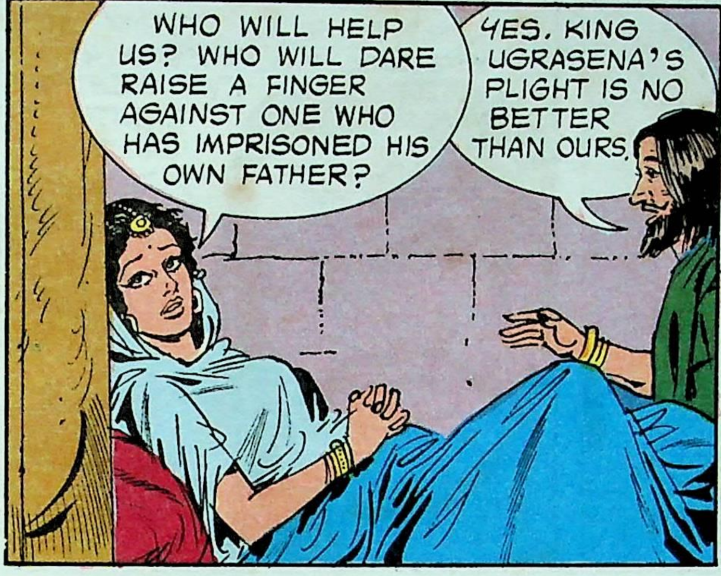
JUST THEN A HEAVENLY VOICE WAS HEARD.

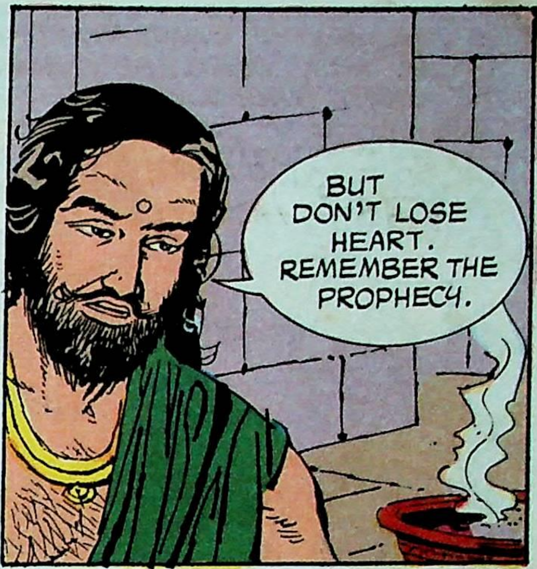
KAMSA, YOU SHALL SOON DIE. THE EIGHTH CHILD BORN TO DEVAKI WILL SLAY YOU!

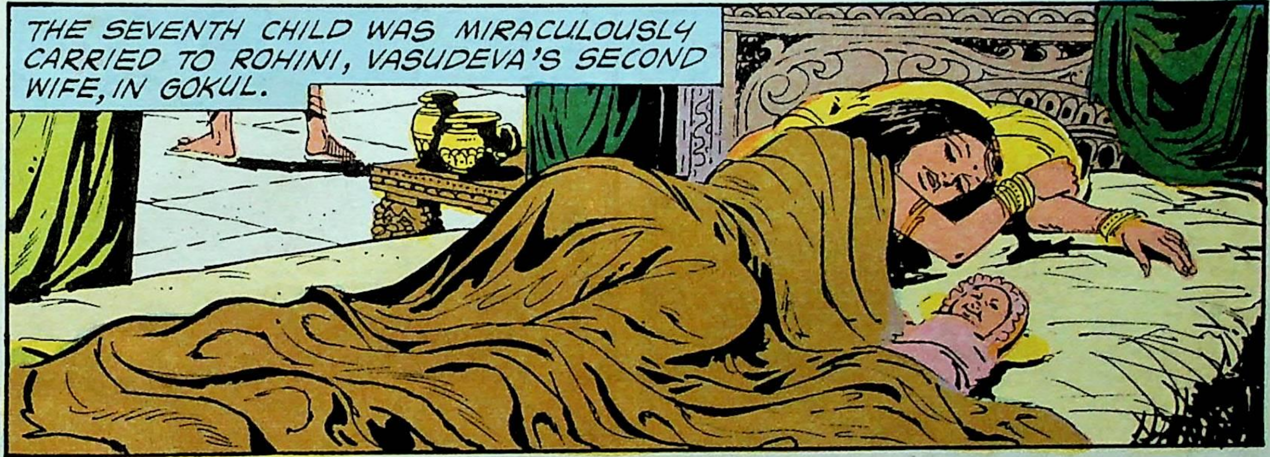


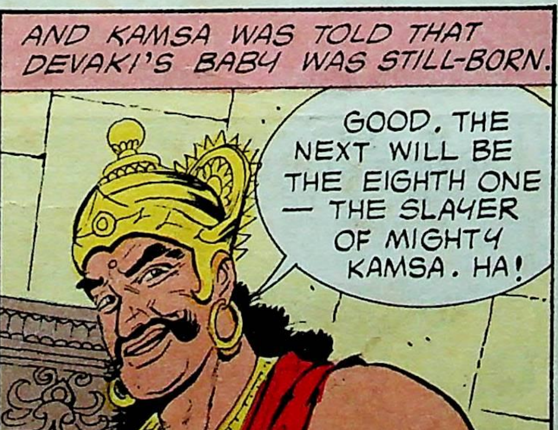
IF SHE LIVES TO HAVE THAT EIGHTH CHILD! I'LL SLAY HER BEFORE THEN!
KAMSA! DON'T!

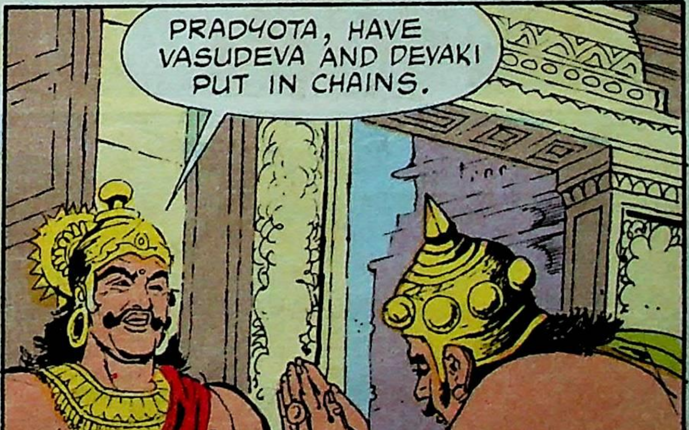

YOUR SISTER HAS DONE YOU NO HARM, KAMSA. AS FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ARE YET TO BE BORN, I SHALL GIVE EACH ONE TO YOU, THE MOMENT IT IS BORN. I PROMISE.
I'LL SPARE DEVAKI, BUT I'LL MAKE SURE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR WORD.
KAMSA CONFINED DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA IN A PALACE. HE VISITED THEM EVERY TIME A BABY WAS BORN.
DEVAKI, GIVE ME THE BABY.
NO!
STOP HIM, MY LORD!
I AM HELPLESS, DEVAKI!
THUS DID THE COUPLE LOSE SIX OF THEIR CHILDREN. WHEN THE SEVENTH ONE WAS ABOUT TO BE BORN—
WE MUST TRY AND SAVE THIS CHILD, DEVAKI.
FROM THAT TYRANT, KAMSA? WE WILL NEVER SUCCEED.

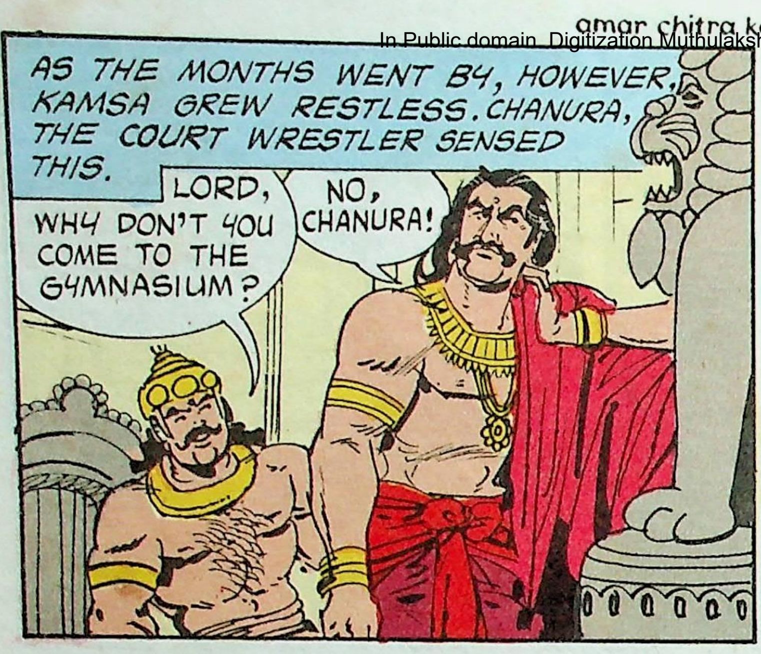

WHO WILL HELP US? WHO WILL DARE RAISE A FINGER AGAINST ONE WHO HAS IMPRISONED HIS OWN FATHER?
YES. KING UGRASENA'S PLIGHT IS NO BETTER THAN OURS.


BUT DON'T LOSE HEART. REMEMBER THE PROPHECY.


THE SEVENTH CHILD WAS MIRACULOUSLY CARRIED TO ROHINI, VASUDEVA'S SECOND WIFE, IN GOKUL.

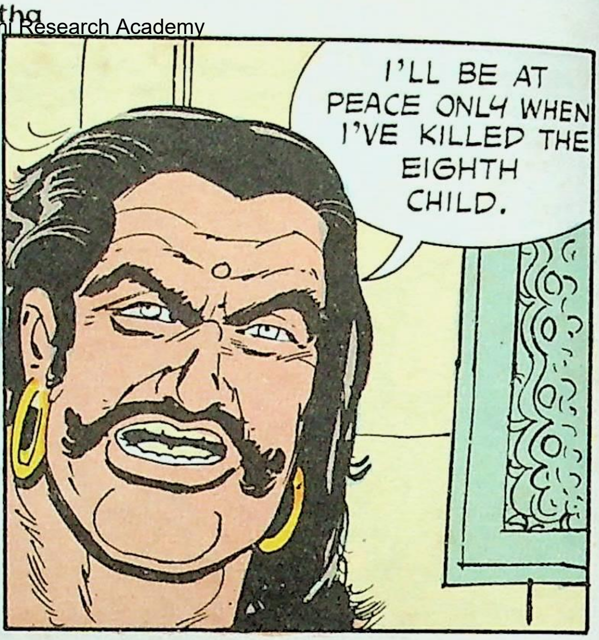

AND KAMSA WAS TOLD THAT DEVAKI'S BABY WAS STILL-BORN.
GOOD. THE NEXT WILL BE THE EIGHTH ONE — THE SLAYER OF MIGHTY KAMSA. HA!


PRADYOTA, HAVE VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI PUT IN CHAINS.

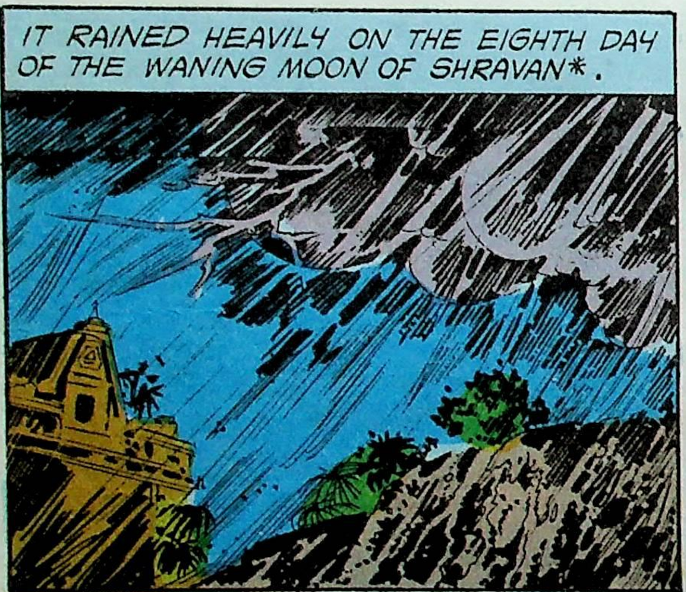


AS THE MONTHS WENT BY, HOWEVER, KAMSA GREW RESTLESS. CHANURA, THE COURT WRESTLER SENSED THIS.

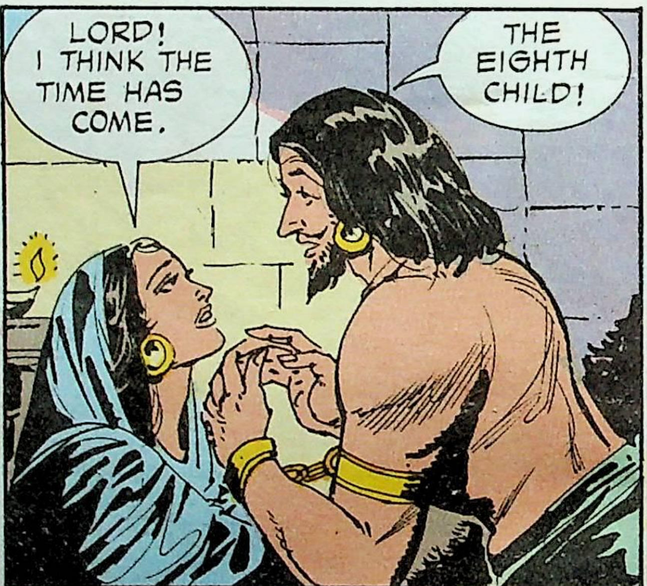
LORD, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO THE GYMNASIUM?
NO, CHANURA!



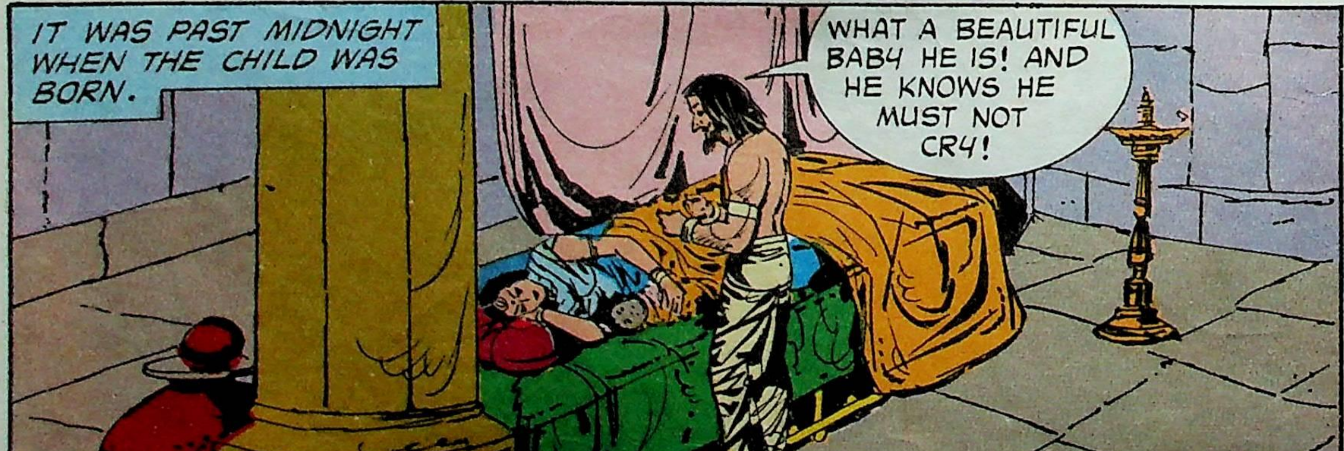
I'LL BE AT PEACE ONLY WHEN I'VE KILLED THE EIGHTH CHILD.



IT RAINED HEAVILY ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE WANING MOON OF SHRAVAN*.



LORD! I THINK THE TIME HAS COME.
THE EIGHTH CHILD!

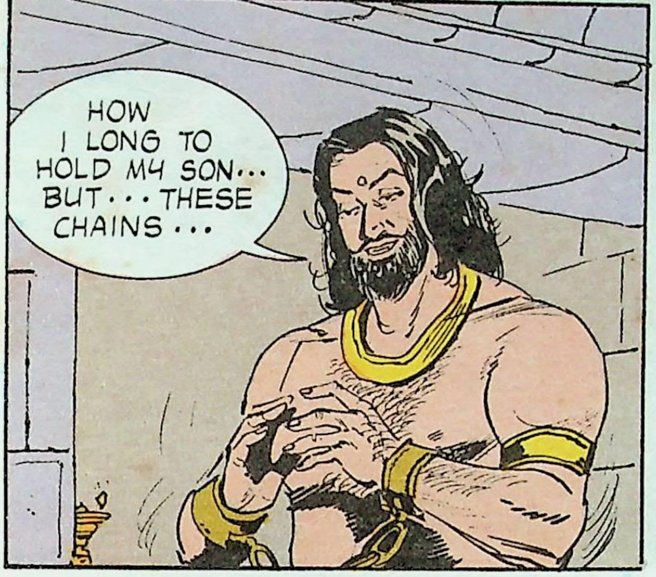


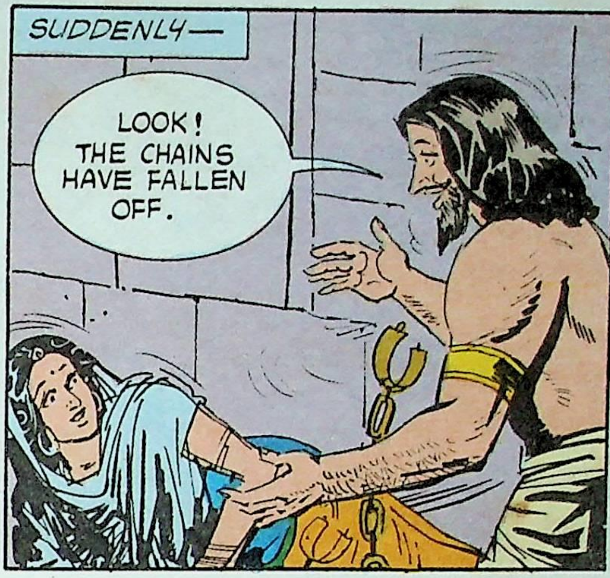
IT WAS PAST MIDNIGHT WHEN THE CHILD WAS BORN.

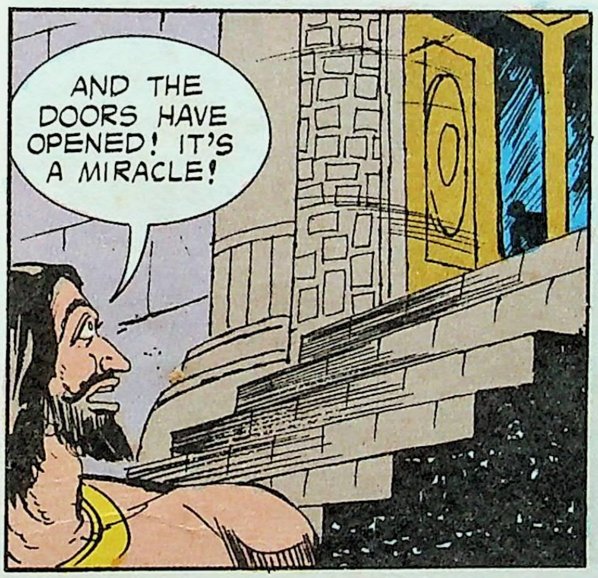
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BABY HE IS! AND HE KNOWS HE MUST NOT CRY!

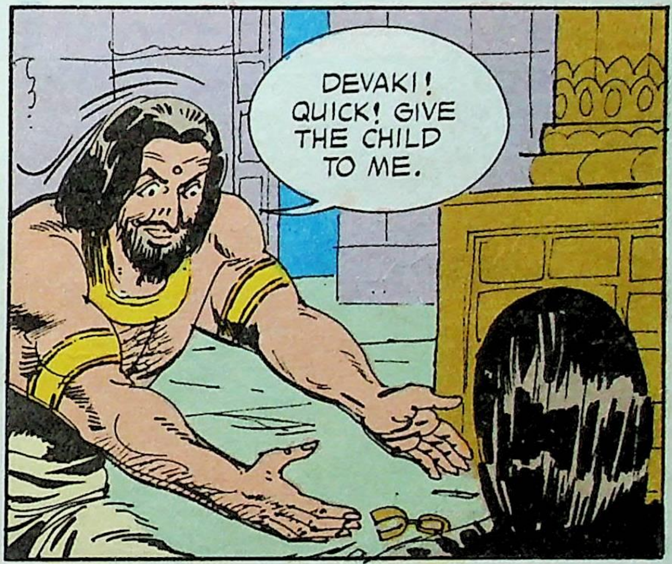
---

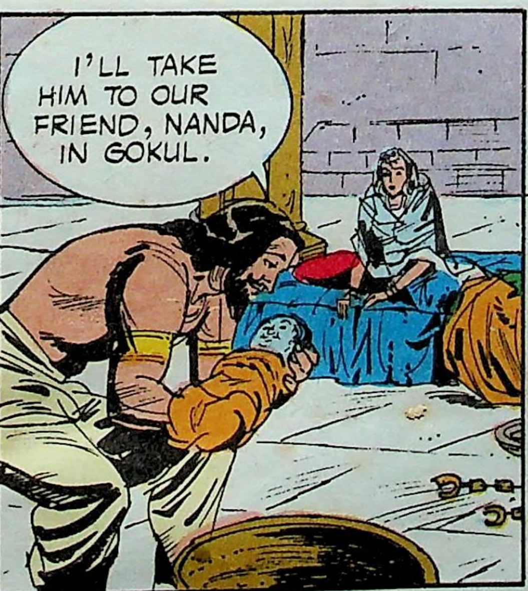
* RECKONED AS THE MONTH OF BHADRAPAD, IN NORTH INDIA

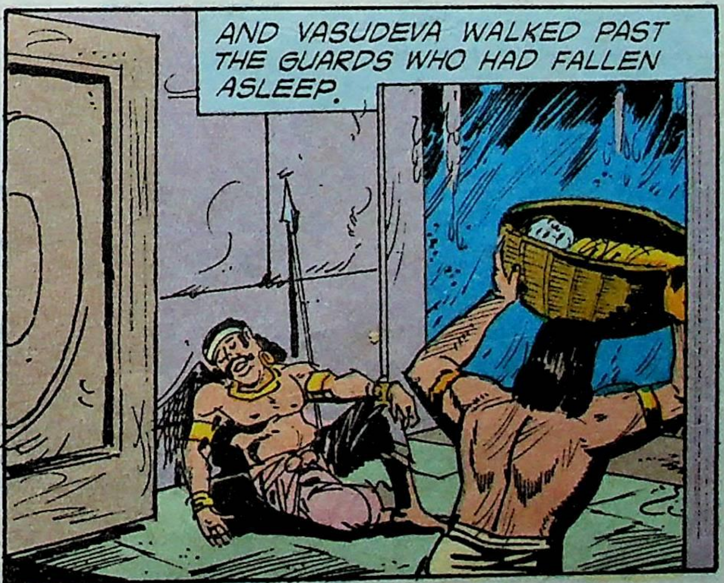

HOW I LONG TO HOLD MY SON... BUT... THESE CHAINS...

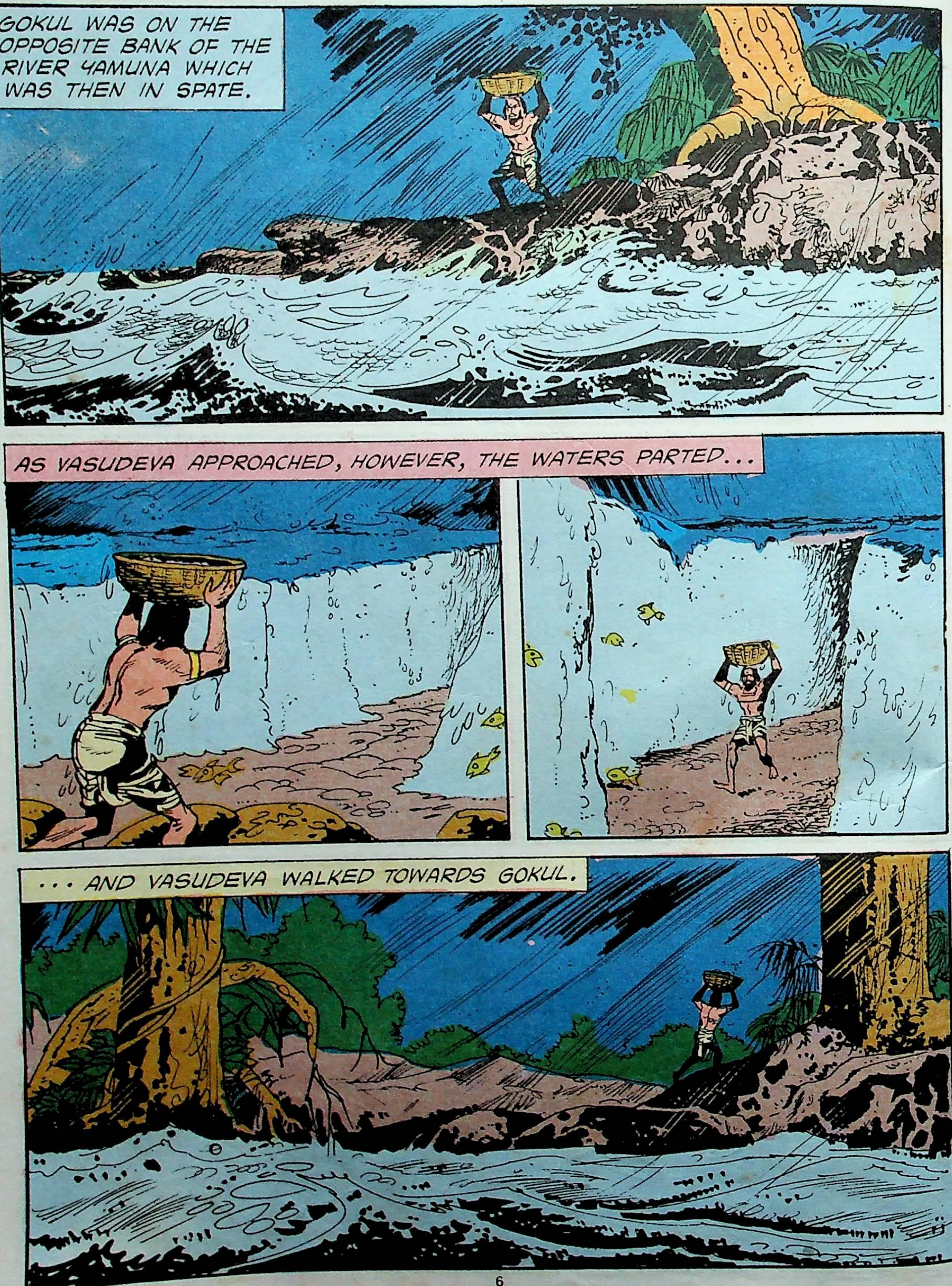

SUDDENLY—
LOOK! THE CHAINS HAVE FALLEN OFF.

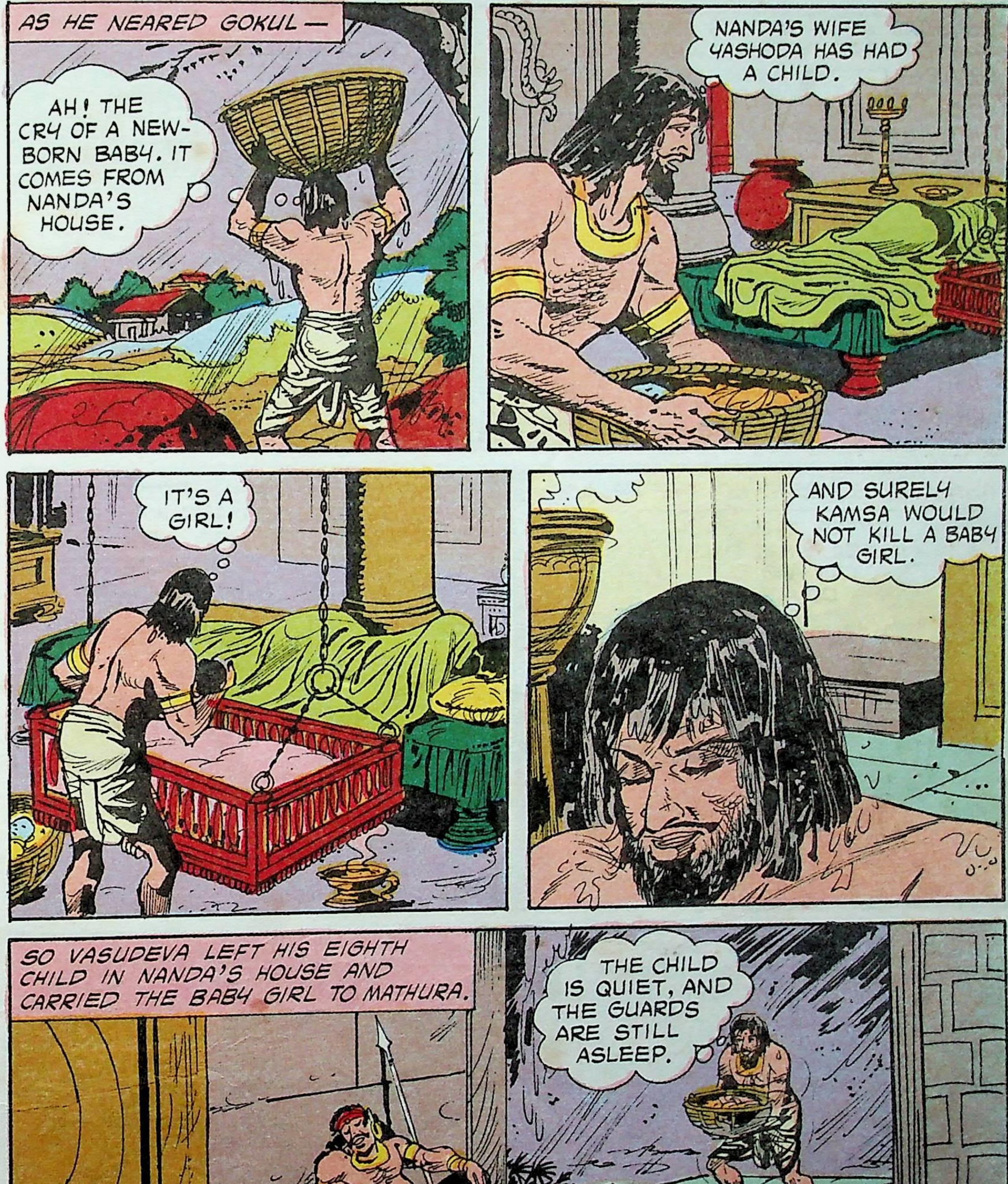

AND THE DOORS HAVE OPENED! IT'S A MIRACLE!


DEVAKI! QUICK! GIVE THE CHILD TO ME.


I'LL TAKE HIM TO OUR FRIEND, NANDA, IN GOKUL.


AND VASUDEVA WALKED PAST THE GUARDS WHO HAD FALLEN ASLEEP.


GOKUL WAS ON THE OPPOSITE BANK OF THE RIVER YAMUNA WHICH WAS THEN IN SPATE.
AS VASUDEVA APPROACHED, HOWEVER, THE WATERS PARTED...
... AND VASUDEVA WALKED TOWARDS GOKUL.

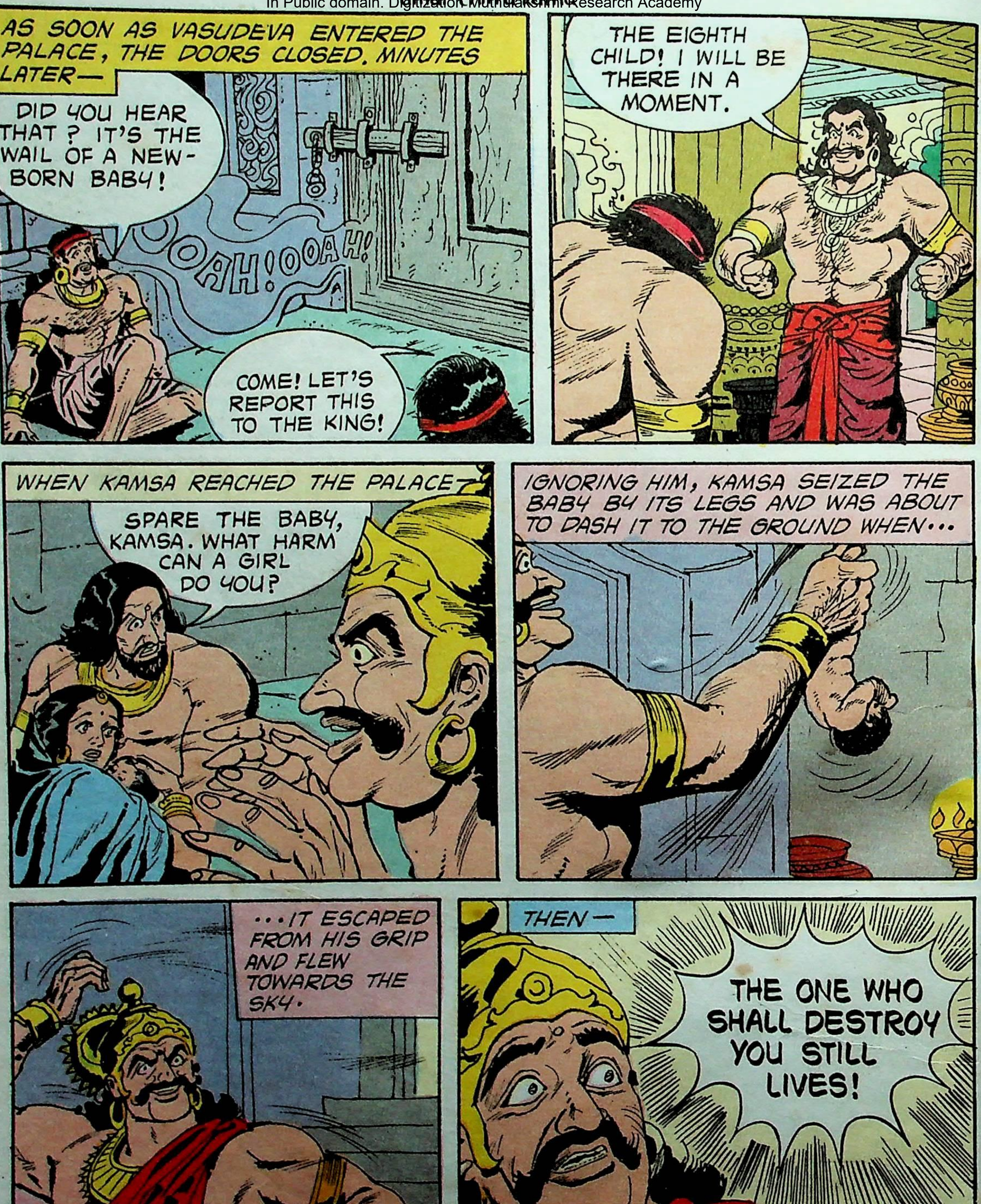


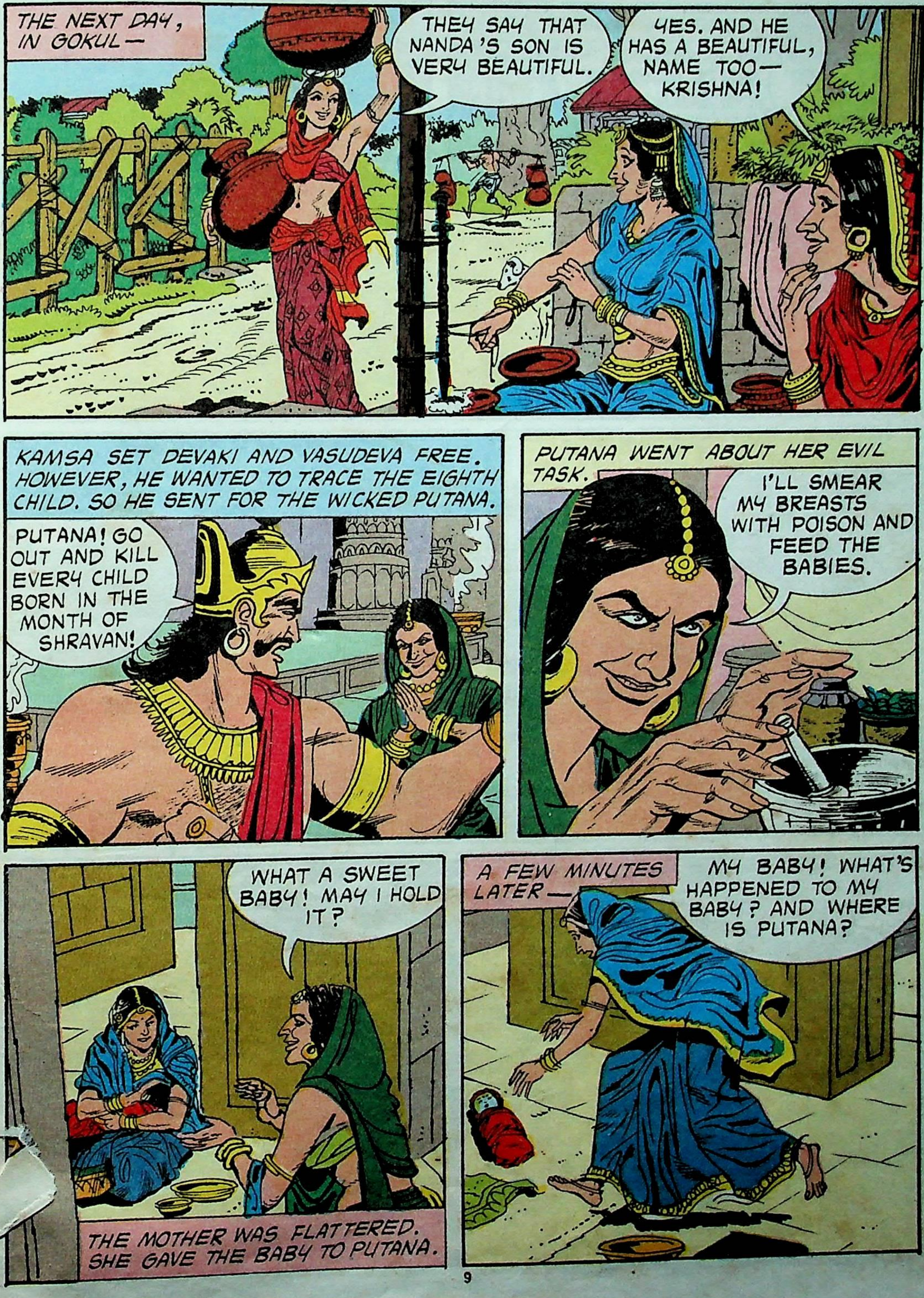
AS HE NEARED GOKUL—

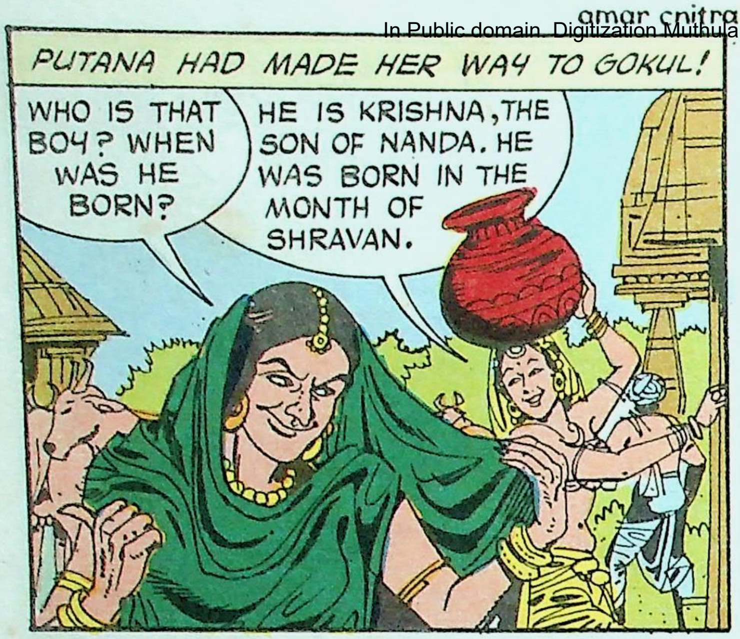
AH! THE CRY OF A NEW-BORN BABY. IT COMES FROM NANDA'S HOUSE.
NANDA'S WIFE YASHODA HAS HAD A CHILD.
IT'S A GIRL!
AND SURELY KAMSA WOULD NOT KILL A BABY GIRL.

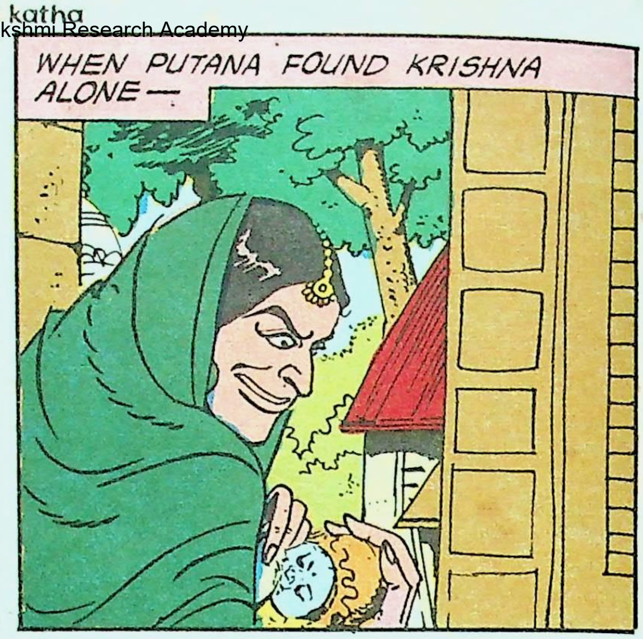
SO VASUDEVA LEFT HIS EIGHTH CHILD IN NANDA'S HOUSE AND CARRIED THE BABY GIRL TO MATHURA.

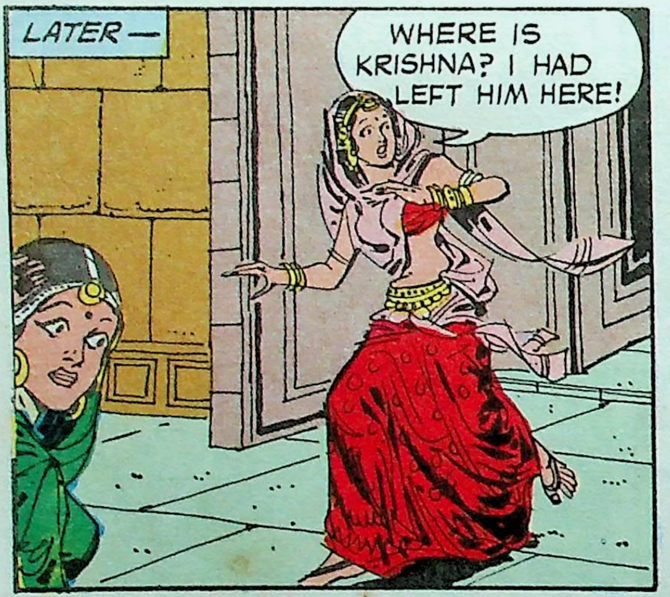
THE CHILD IS QUIET, AND THE GUARDS ARE STILL ASLEEP.

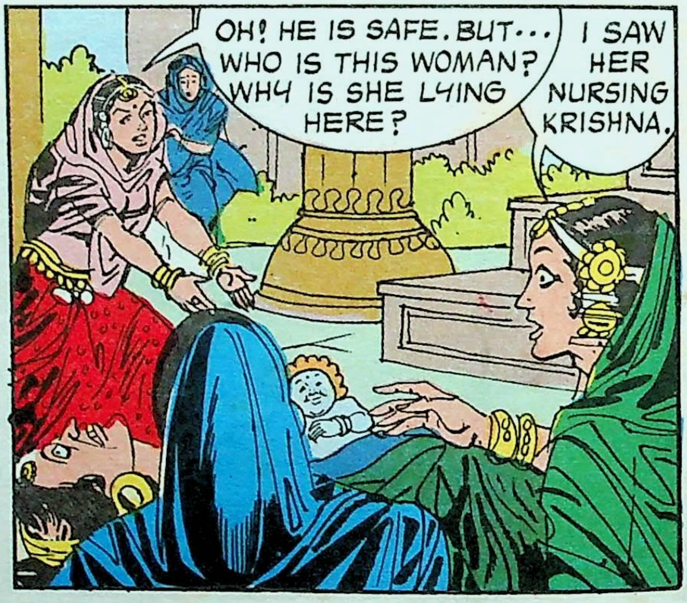

AS SOON AS VASUDEVA ENTERED THE PALACE, THE DOORS CLOSED. MINUTES LATER—
DID YOU HEAR THAT ? IT'S THE WAIL OF A NEW-BORN BABY!
OOAH! OOAH!
COME! LET'S REPORT THIS TO THE KING!
THE EIGHTH CHILD! I WILL BE THERE IN A MOMENT.
WHEN KAMSA REACHED THE PALACE—
SPARE THE BABY, KAMSA. WHAT HARM CAN A GIRL DO YOU?
IGNORING HIM, KAMSA SEIZED THE BABY BY ITS LEGS AND WAS ABOUT TO DASH IT TO THE GROUND WHEN...
...IT ESCAPED FROM HIS GRIP AND FLEW TOWARDS THE SKY.
THEN—
THE ONE WHO SHALL DESTROY YOU STILL LIVES!

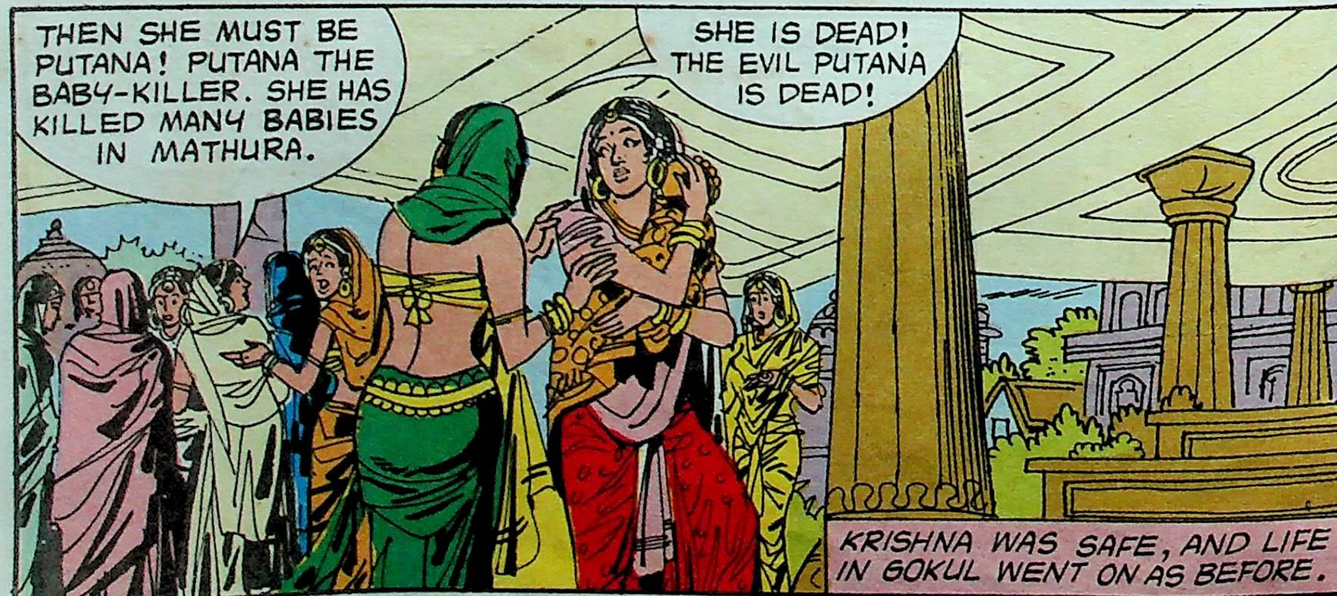

THE NEXT DAY, IN GOKUL—
THEY SAY THAT NANDA'S SON IS VERY BEAUTIFUL.
YES. AND HE HAS A BEAUTIFUL, NAME TOO— KRISHNA!
KAMSA SET DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA FREE. HOWEVER, HE WANTED TO TRACE THE EIGHTH CHILD. SO HE SENT FOR THE WICKED PUTANA.
PUTANA! GO OUT AND KILL EVERY CHILD BORN IN THE MONTH OF SHRAVAN!
PUTANA WENT ABOUT HER EVIL TASK.
I'LL SMEAR MY BREASTS WITH POISON AND FEED THE BABIES.
WHAT A SWEET BABY! MAY I HOLD IT?
THE MOTHER WAS FLATTERED. SHE GAVE THE BABY TO PUTANA.
A FEW MINUTES LATER—
MY BABY! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY BABY? AND WHERE IS PUTANA?

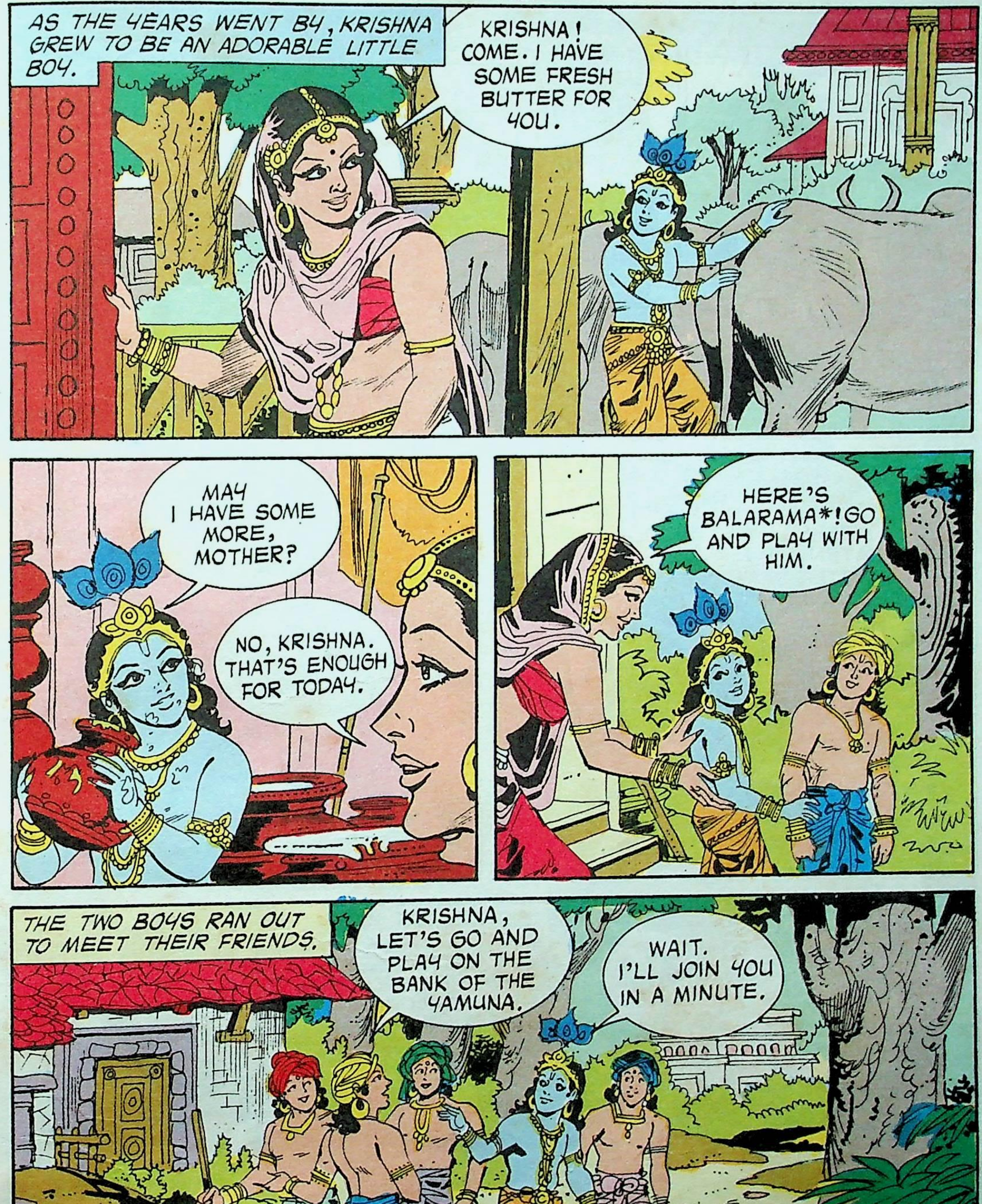

PUTANA HAD MADE HER WAY TO GOKUL!
WHO IS THAT BOY? WHEN WAS HE BORN?
HE IS KRISHNA, THE SON OF NANDA. HE WAS BORN IN THE MONTH OF SHRAVAN.


WHEN PUTANA FOUND KRISHNA ALONE —

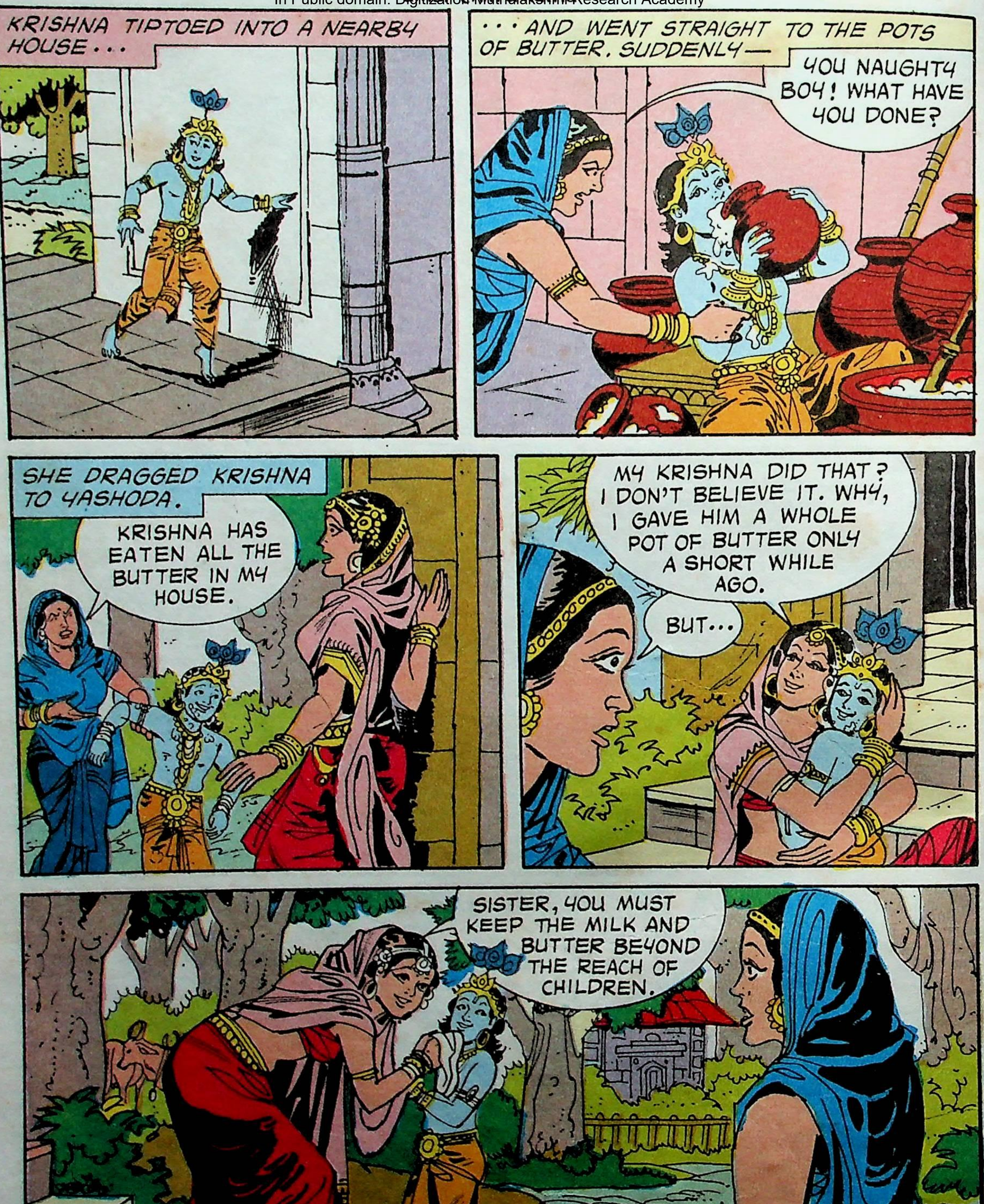

LATER —
WHERE IS KRISHNA? I HAD LEFT HIM HERE!

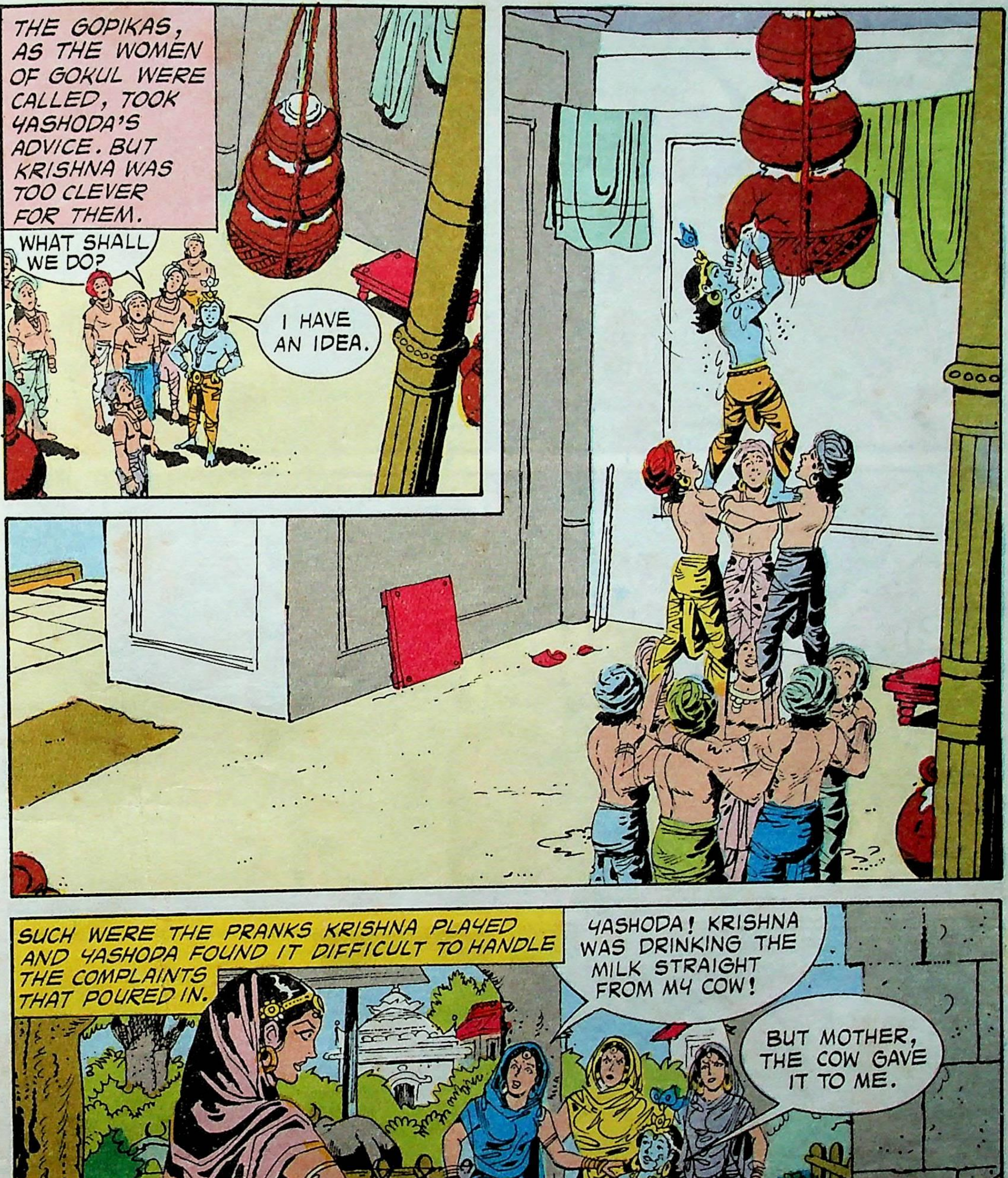

OH! HE IS SAFE. BUT... WHO IS THIS WOMAN? WHY IS SHE LYING HERE?
I SAW HER NURSING KRISHNA.

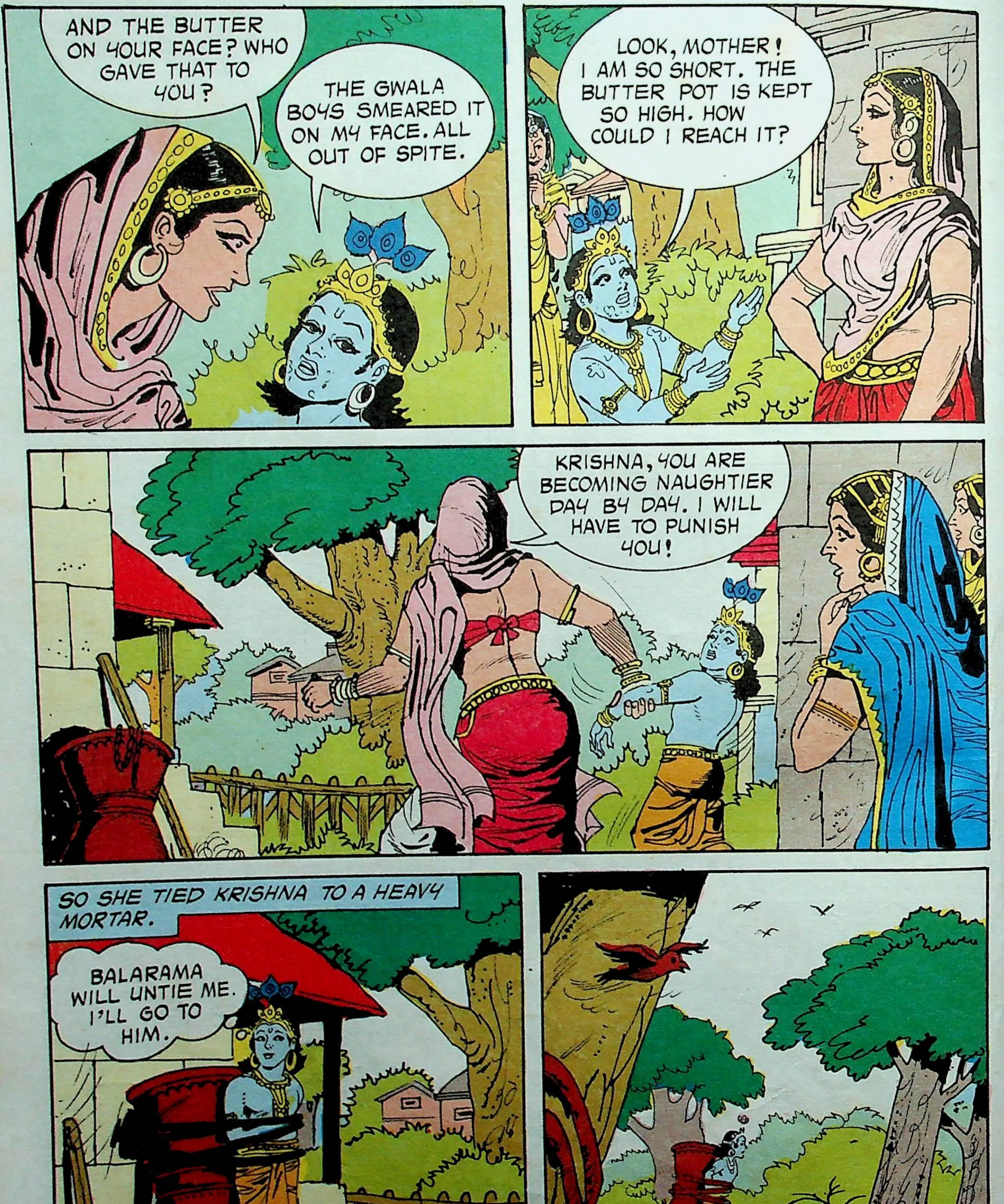

THEN SHE MUST BE PUTANA! PUTANA THE BABY-KILLER. SHE HAS KILLED MANY BABIES IN MATHURA.
SHE IS DEAD! THE EVIL PUTANA IS DEAD!
KRISHNA WAS SAFE, AND LIFE IN GOKUL WENT ON AS BEFORE.

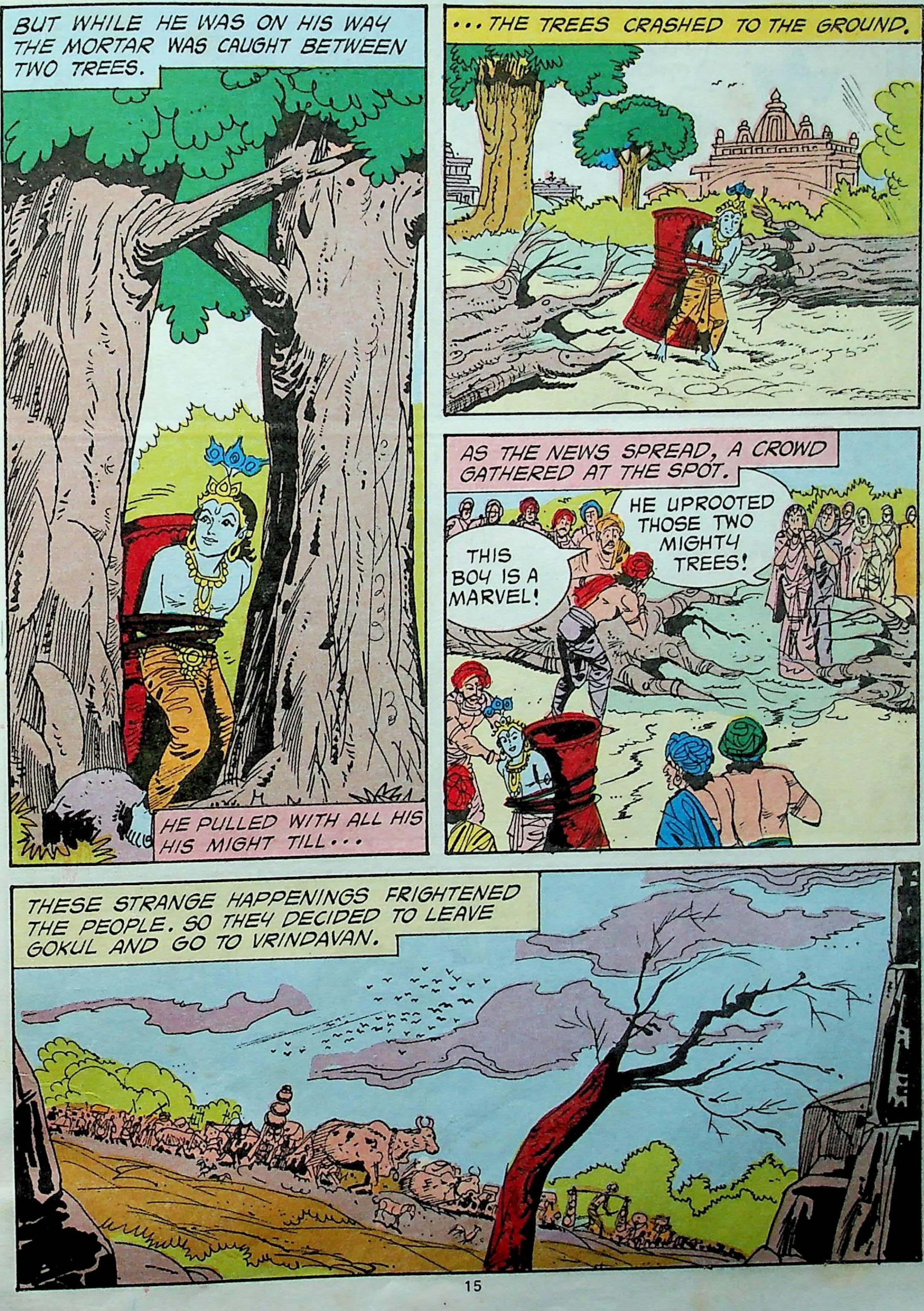

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, KRISHNA GREW TO BE AN ADORABLE LITTLE BOY.
KRISHNA! COME. I HAVE SOME FRESH BUTTER FOR YOU.
MAY I HAVE SOME MORE, MOTHER?
NO, KRISHNA. THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
HERE'S BALARAMA*! GO AND PLAY WITH HIM.
THE TWO BOYS RAN OUT TO MEET THEIR FRIENDS.
KRISHNA, LET'S GO AND PLAY ON THE BANK OF THE YAMUNA.
WAIT. I'LL JOIN YOU IN A MINUTE.

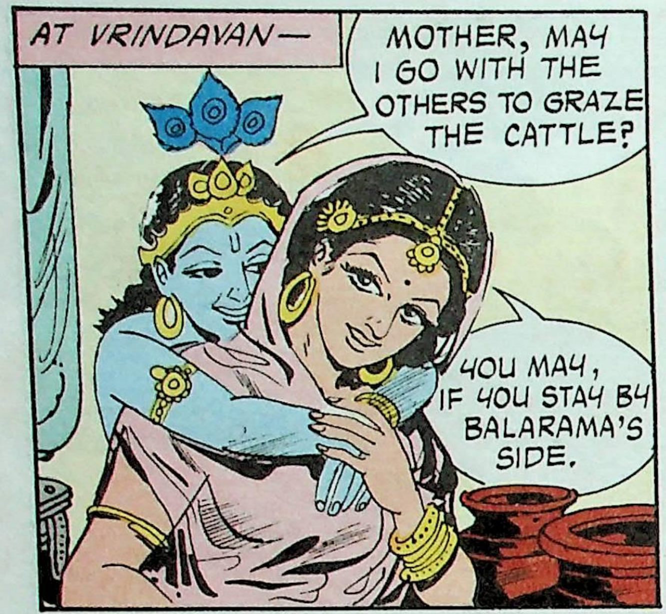
* DEVAKI'S SEVENTH CHILD, LOOKED AFTER BY ROHINI

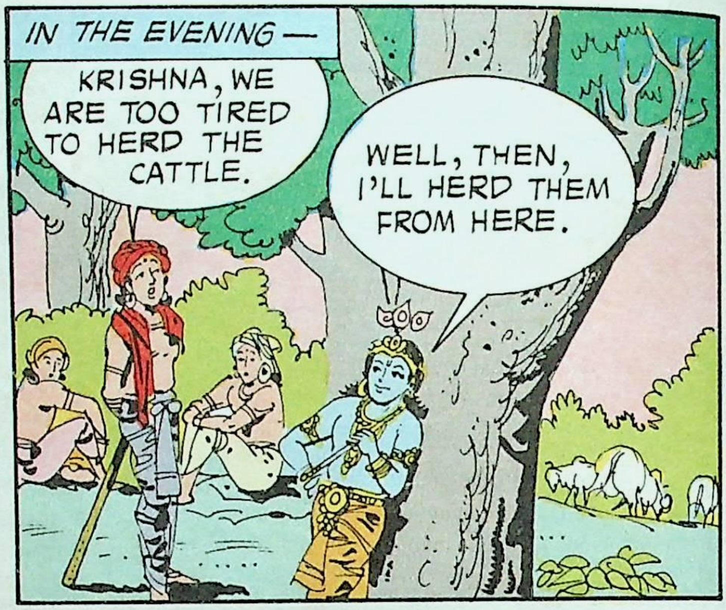

KRISHNA TIPTOED INTO A NEARBY HOUSE . . .
. . . AND WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POTS OF BUTTER. SUDDENLY—
YOU NAUGHTY BOY! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
SHE DRAGGED KRISHNA TO YASHODA.
KRISHNA HAS EATEN ALL THE BUTTER IN MY HOUSE.
MY KRISHNA DID THAT? I DON'T BELIEVE IT. WHY, I GAVE HIM A WHOLE POT OF BUTTER ONLY A SHORT WHILE AGO.
BUT . . .
SISTER, YOU MUST KEEP THE MILK AND BUTTER BEYOND THE REACH OF CHILDREN.

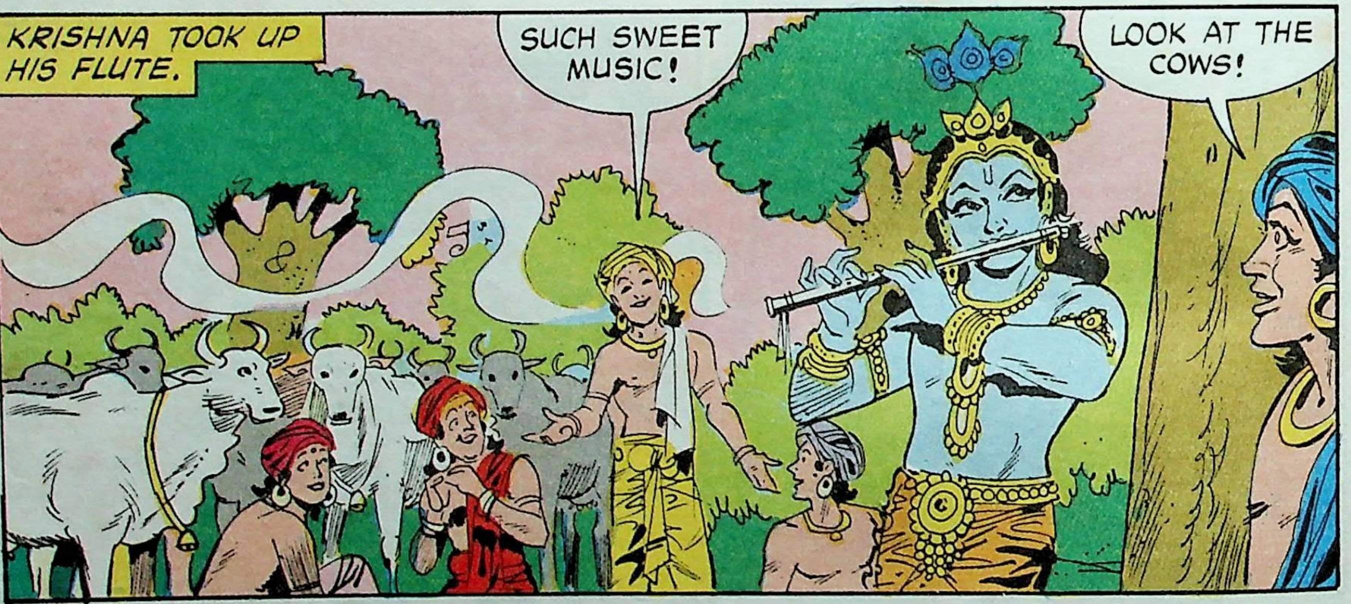

THE GOPIKAS, AS THE WOMEN OF GOKUL WERE CALLED, TOOK YASHODA'S ADVICE. BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO CLEVER FOR THEM.
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
I HAVE AN IDEA.
SUCH WERE THE PRANKS KRISHNA PLAYED AND YASHODA FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO HANDLE THE COMPLAINTS THAT POURED IN.
YASHODA! KRISHNA WAS DRINKING THE MILK STRAIGHT FROM MY COW!
BUT MOTHER, THE COW GAVE IT TO ME.

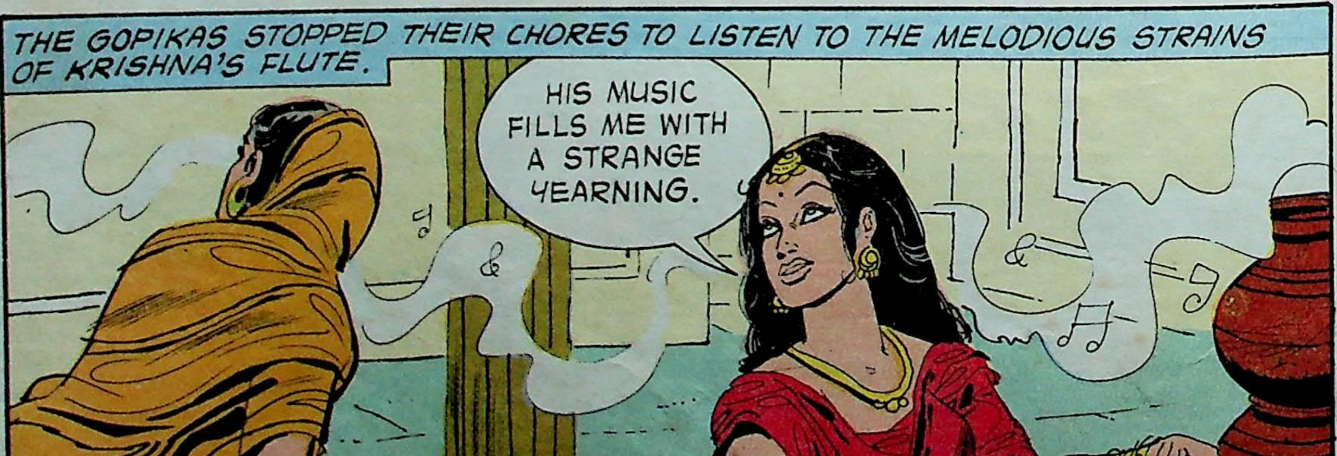

AND THE BUTTER ON YOUR FACE? WHO GAVE THAT TO YOU?
THE GWALA BOYS SMEARED IT ON MY FACE. ALL OUT OF SPITE.
LOOK, MOTHER! I AM SO SHORT. THE BUTTER POT IS KEPT SO HIGH. HOW COULD I REACH IT?
KRISHNA, YOU ARE BECOMING NAUGHTIER DAY BY DAY. I WILL HAVE TO PUNISH YOU!
SO SHE TIED KRISHNA TO A HEAVY MORTAR.
BALARAMA WILL UNTIE ME. I'LL GO TO HIM.

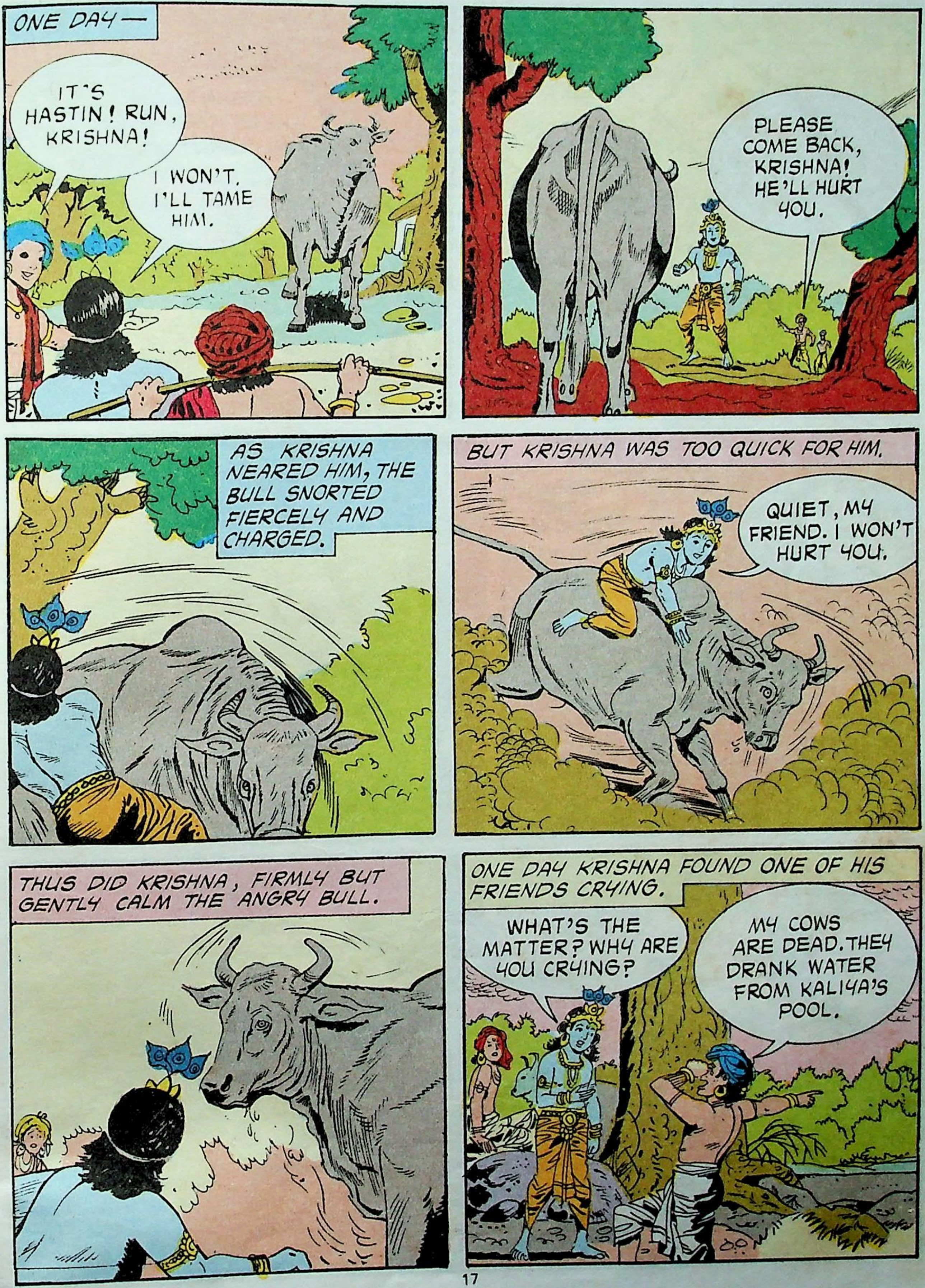

BUT WHILE HE WAS ON HIS WAY THE MORTAR WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO TREES.
HE PULLED WITH ALL HIS HIS MIGHT TILL...
...THE TREES CRASHED TO THE GROUND.
AS THE NEWS SPREAD, A CROWD GATHERED AT THE SPOT.
HE UPROOTED THOSE TWO MIGHTY TREES!
THIS BOY IS A MARVEL!
THESE STRANGE HAPPENINGS FRIGHTENED THE PEOPLE. SO THEY DECIDED TO LEAVE GOKUL AND GO TO VRINDAVAN.

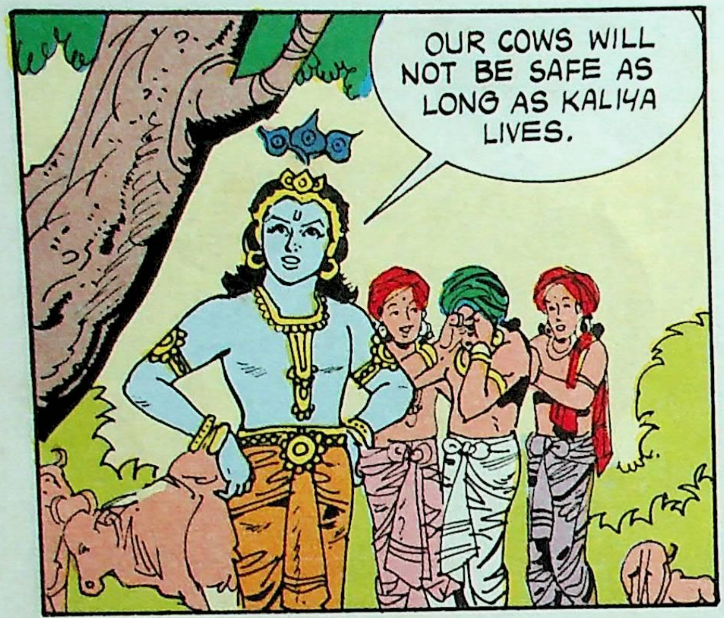

AT VRINDAVAN—
MOTHER, MAY I GO WITH THE OTHERS TO GRAZE THE CATTLE?
YOU MAY, IF YOU STAY BY BALARAMA'S SIDE.


IN THE EVENING—
KRISHNA, WE ARE TOO TIRED TO HERD THE CATTLE.
WELL, THEN, I'LL HERD THEM FROM HERE.

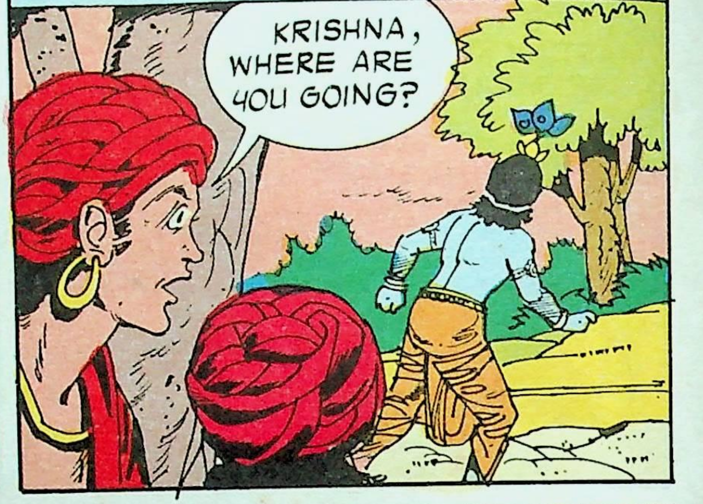

KRISHNA TOOK UP HIS FLUTE.
SUCH SWEET MUSIC!
LOOK AT THE COWS!

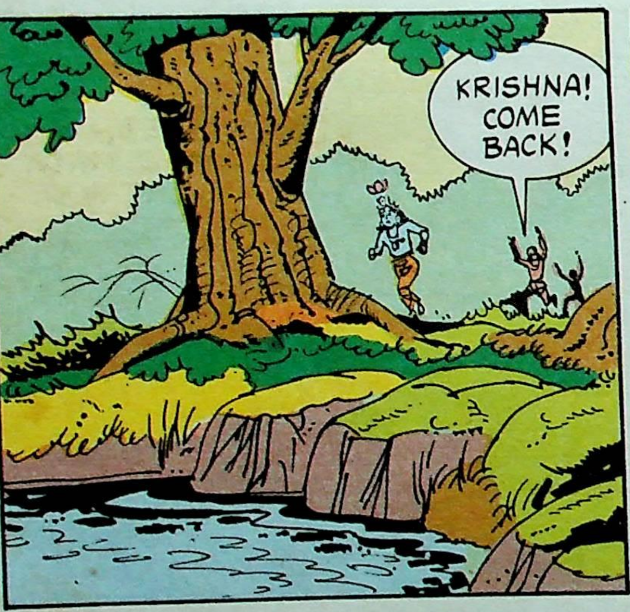

THE GOPIKAS STOPPED THEIR CHORES TO LISTEN TO THE MELODIOUS STRAINS OF KRISHNA'S FLUTE.
HIS MUSIC FILLS ME WITH A STRANGE YEARNING.

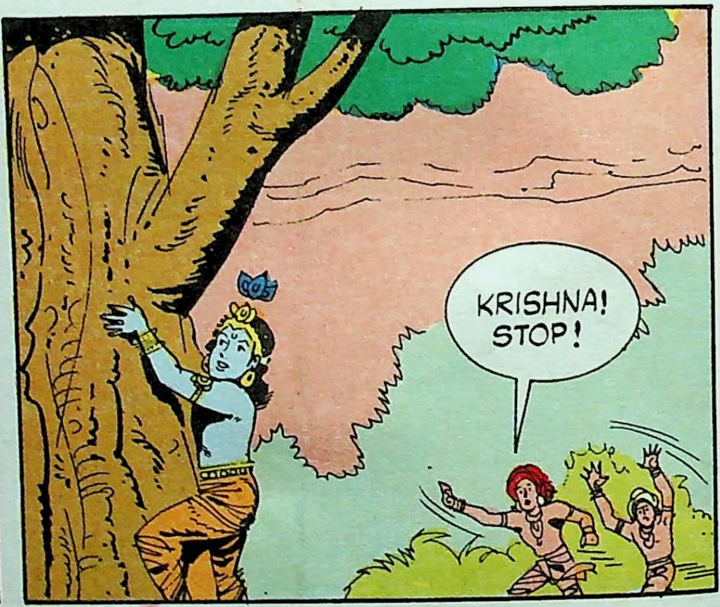

ONE DAY —
IT'S HASTIN! RUN, KRISHNA!
I WON'T. I'LL TAME HIM.
PLEASE COME BACK, KRISHNA! HE'LL HURT YOU.
AS KRISHNA NEARED HIM, THE BULL SNORTED FIERCELY AND CHARGED.
BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM.
QUIET, MY FRIEND. I WON'T HURT YOU.
THUS DID KRISHNA, FIRMLY BUT GENTLY CALM THE ANGRY BULL.
ONE DAY KRISHNA FOUND ONE OF HIS FRIENDS CRYING.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
MY COWS ARE DEAD. THEY DRANK WATER FROM KALIYA'S POOL.

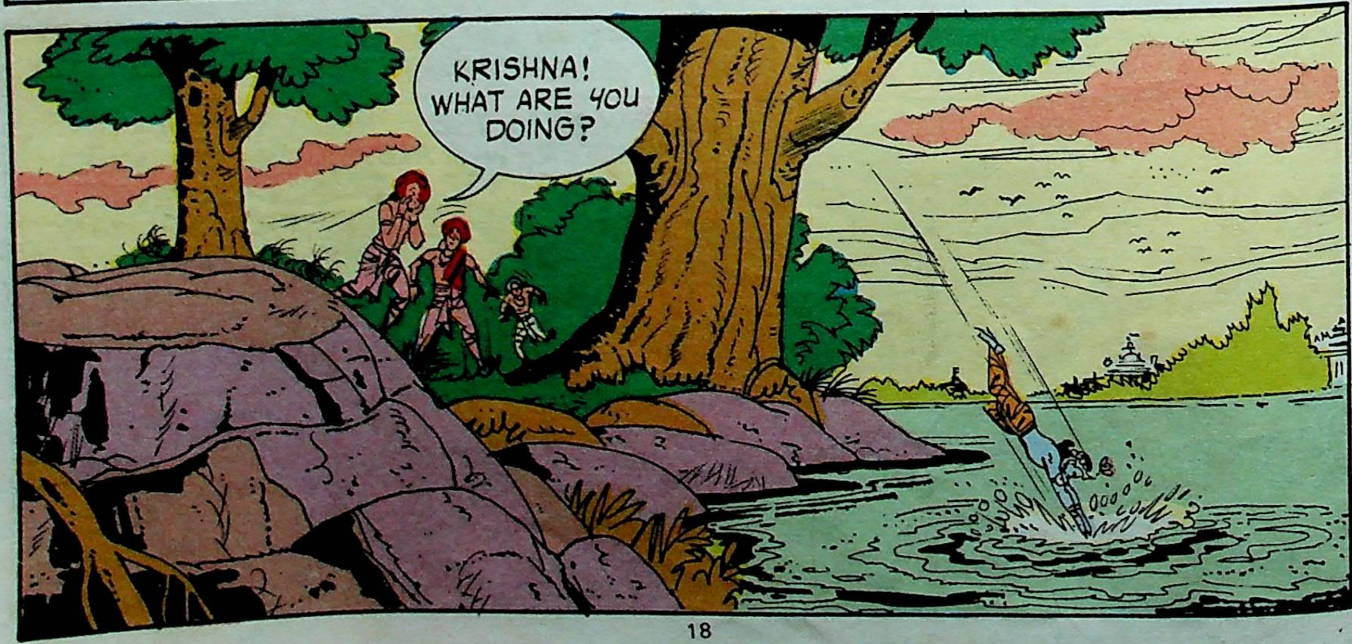

OUR COWS WILL NOT BE SAFE AS LONG AS KALIYA LIVES.

KALIYA WAS A POISONOUS SNAKE WHO, WITH HIS FAMILY, LIVED IN THE POOL. KRISHNA DECIDED TO CONFRONT HIM.


KRISHNA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?


KRISHNA! COME BACK!


KRISHNA! STOP!


KRISHNA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

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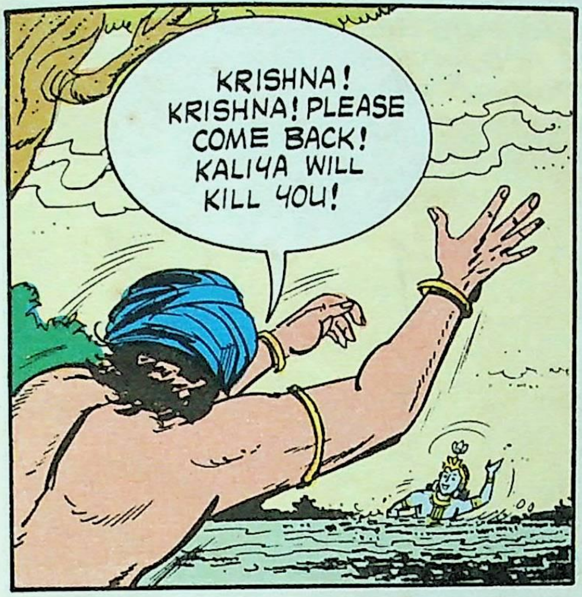
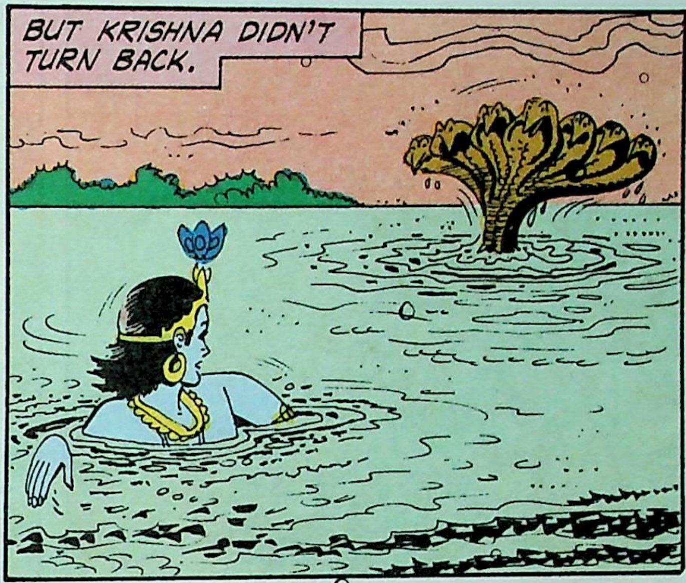
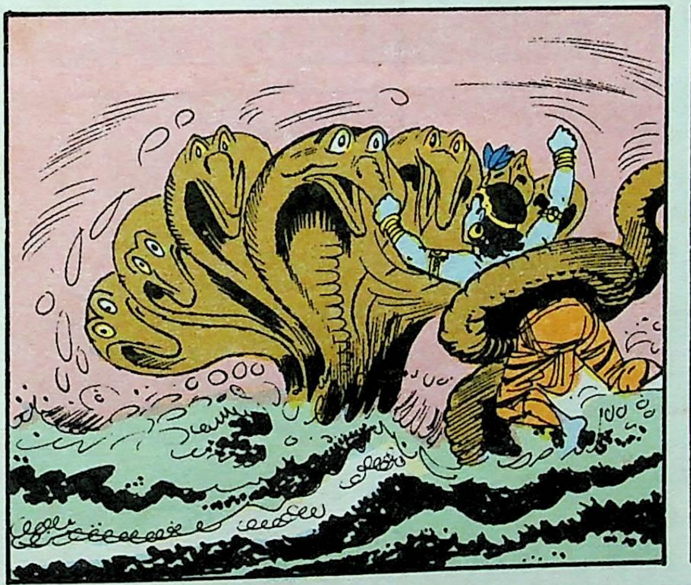
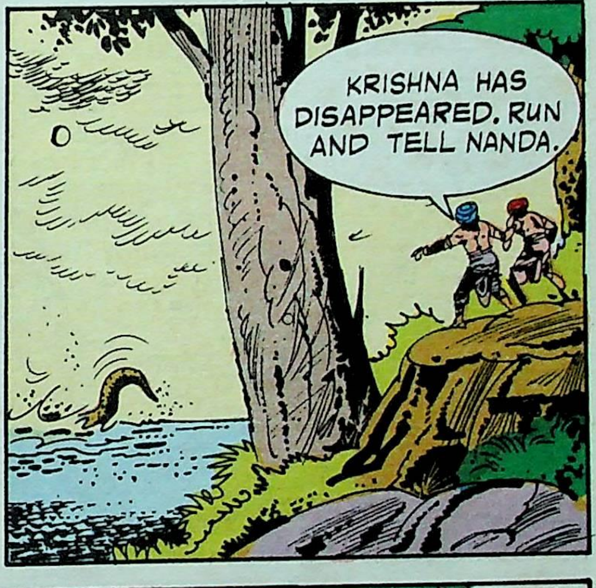
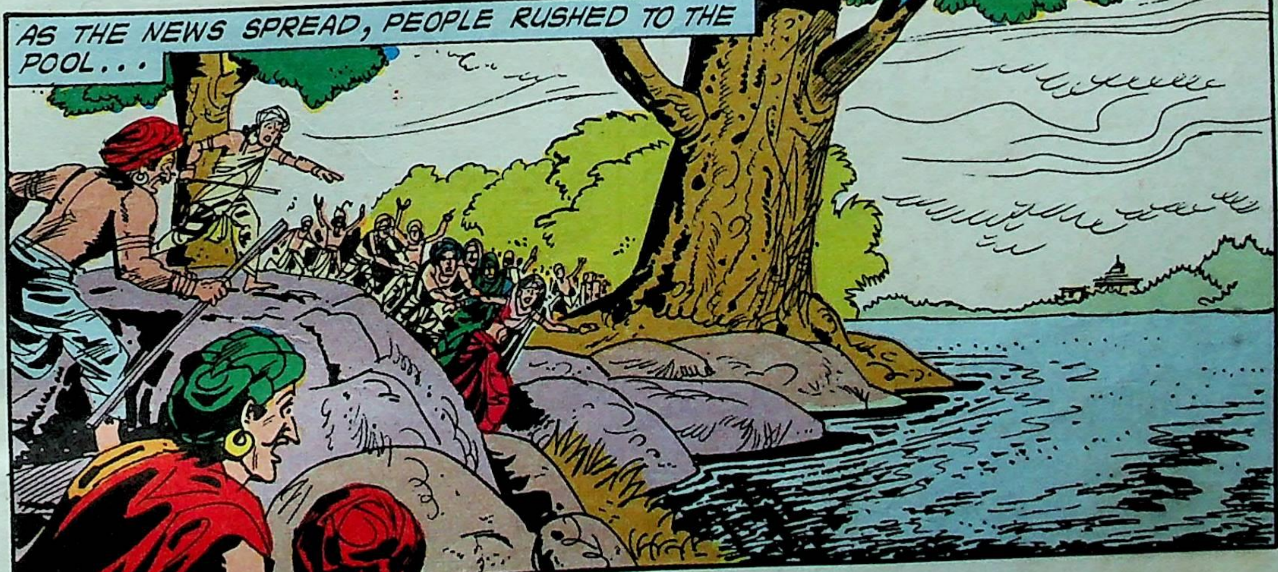
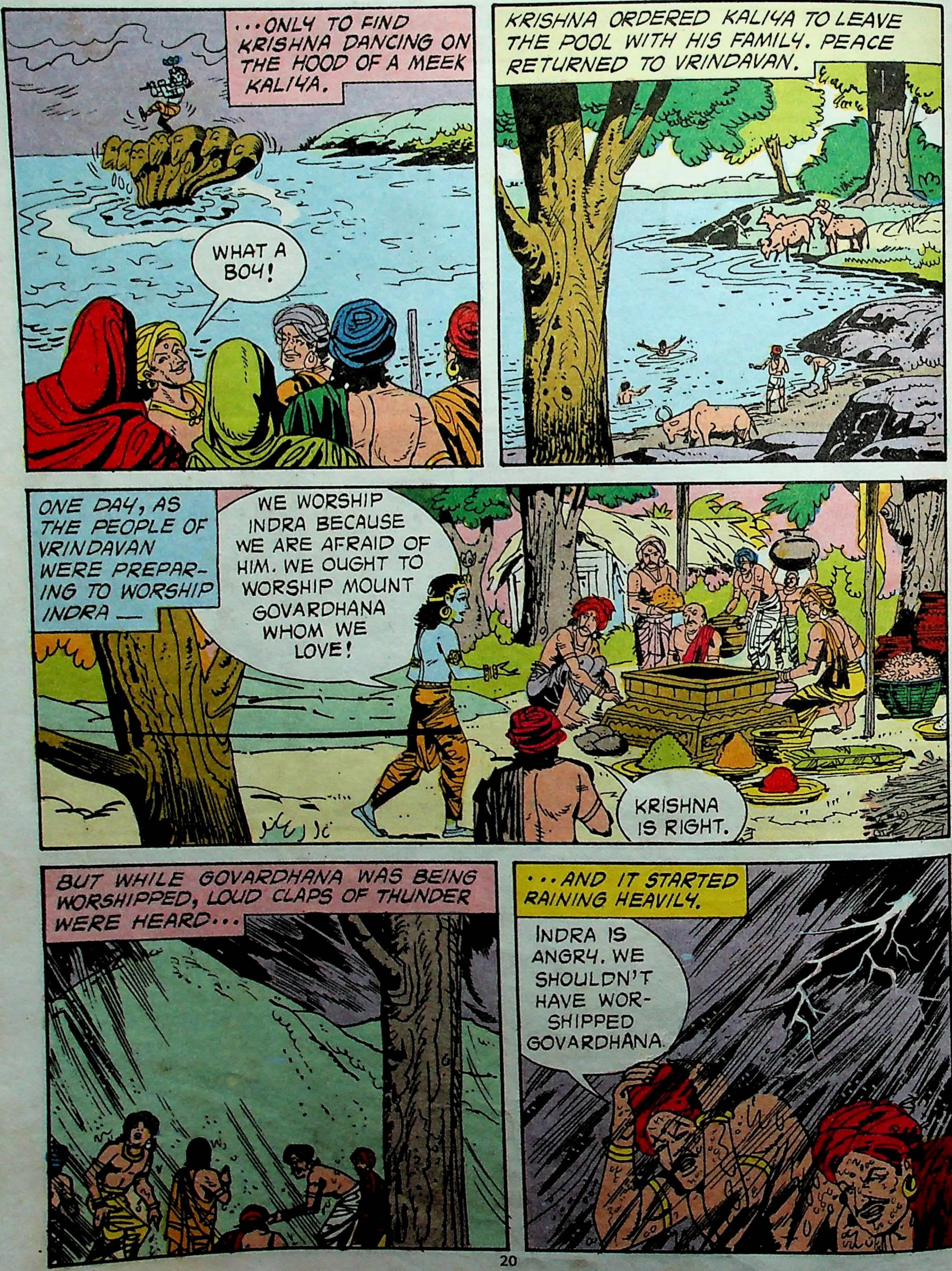

KRISHNA! KRISHNA! PLEASE COME BACK! KALIYA WILL KILL YOU!

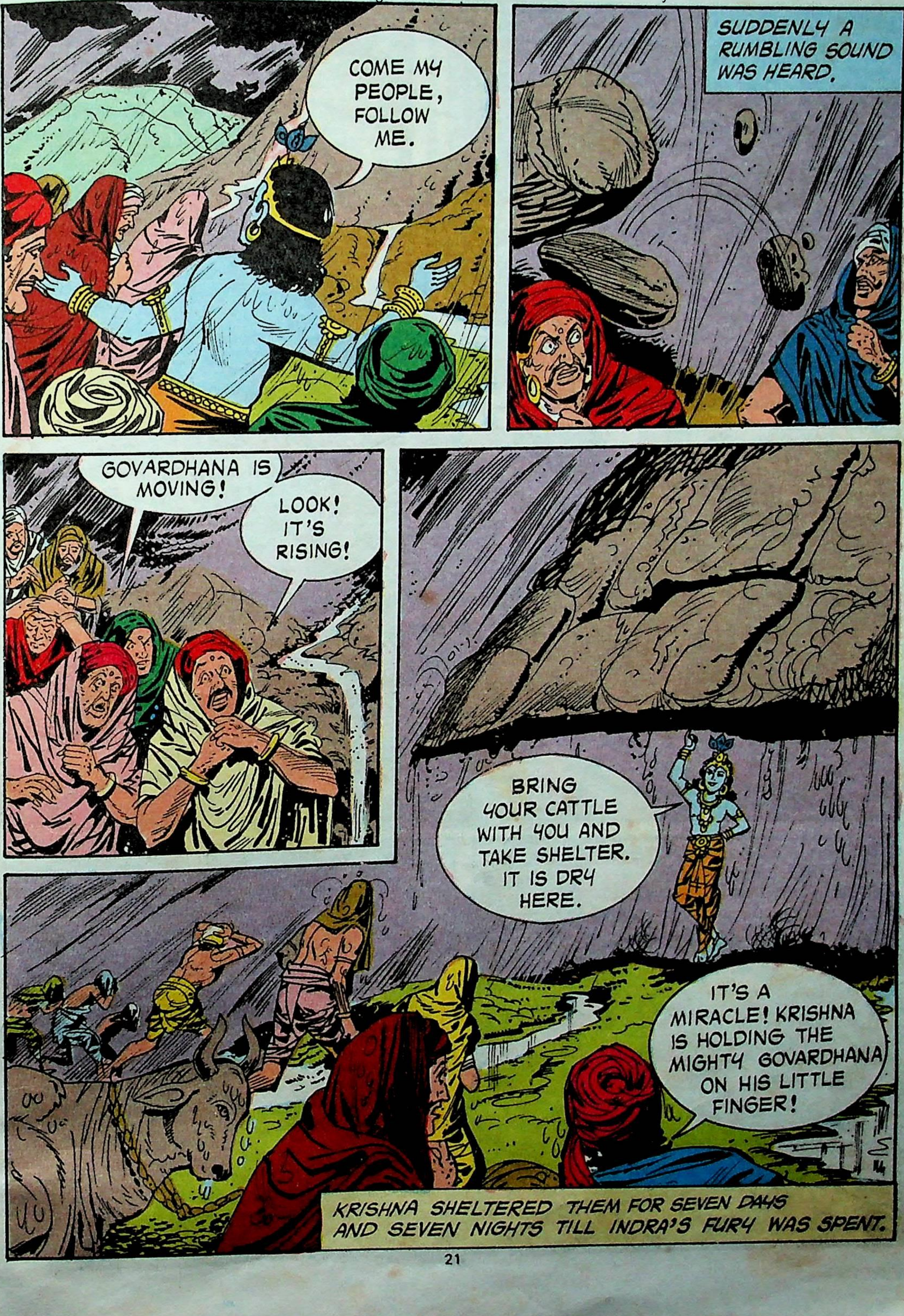

BUT KRISHNA DIDN'T TURN BACK.

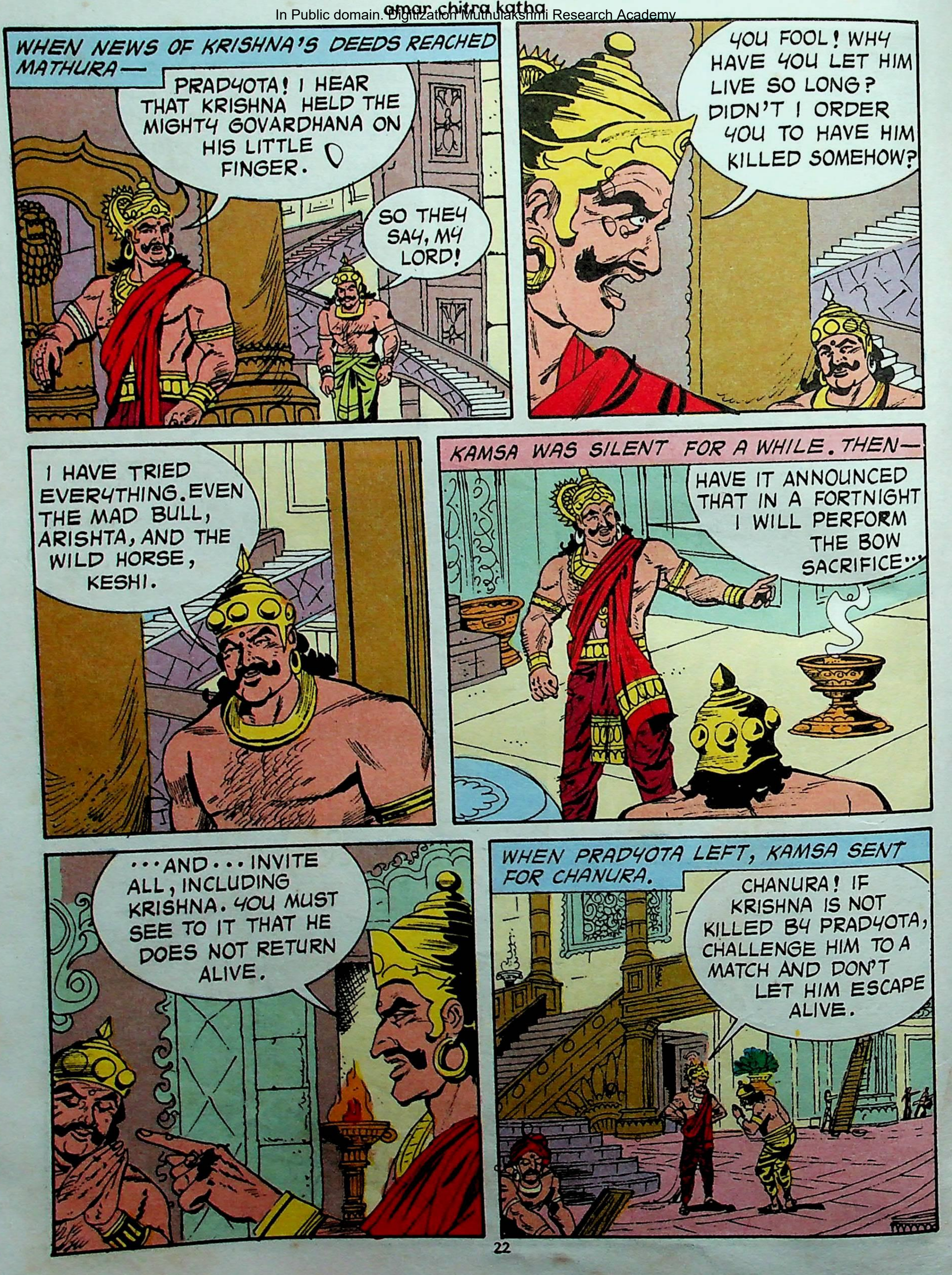


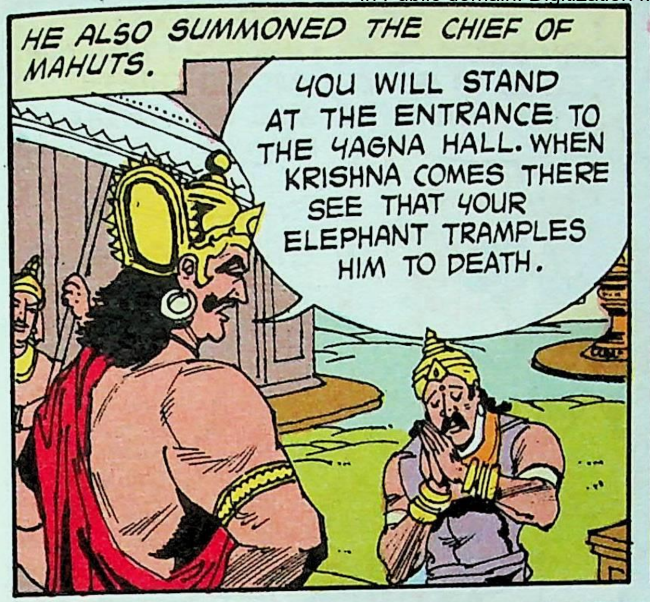

KRISHNA HAS DISAPPEARED. RUN AND TELL NANDA.

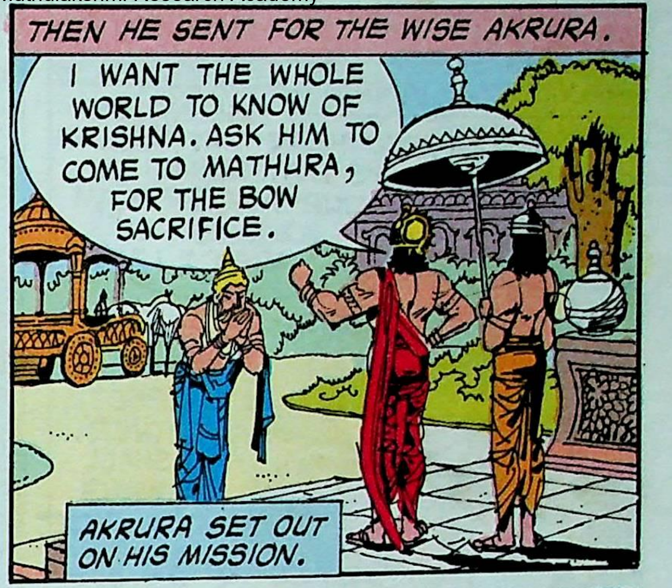

AS THE NEWS SPREAD, PEOPLE RUSHED TO THE POOL...

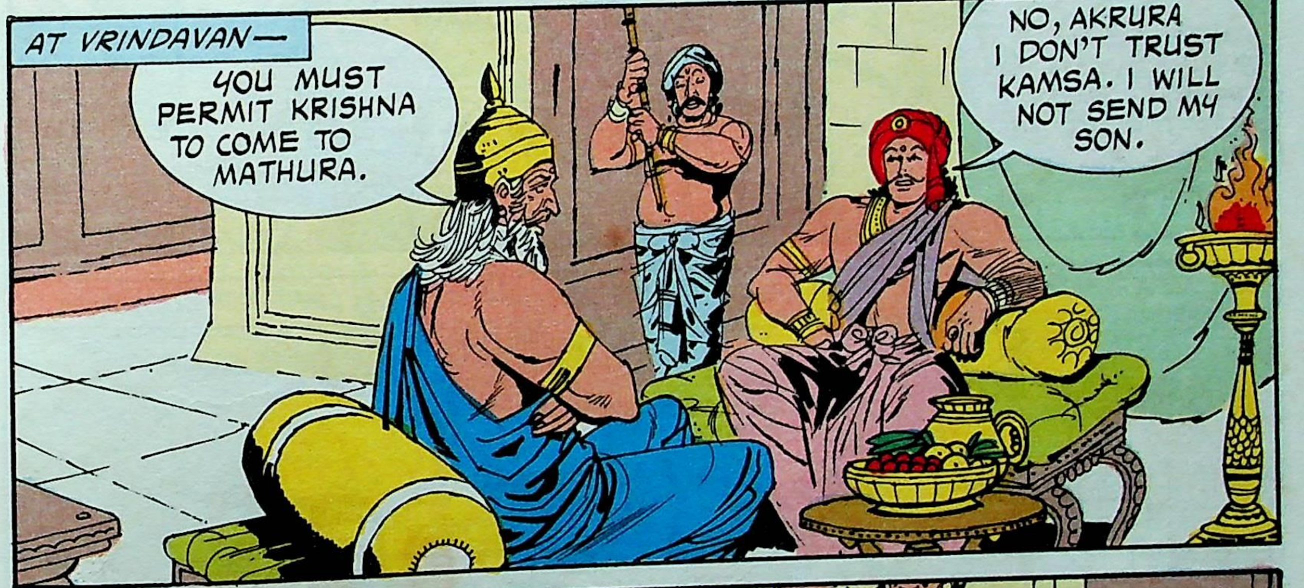

...ONLY TO FIND KRISHNA DANCING ON THE HOOD OF A MEEK KALIYA.
WHAT A BOY!
KRISHNA ORDERED KALIYA TO LEAVE THE POOL WITH HIS FAMILY. PEACE RETURNED TO VRINDAVAN.
ONE DAY, AS THE PEOPLE OF VRINDAVAN WERE PREPARING TO WORSHIP INDRA —
WE WORSHIP INDRA BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID OF HIM. WE OUGHT TO WORSHIP MOUNT GOVARDHANA WHOM WE LOVE!
KRISHNA IS RIGHT.
BUT WHILE GOVARDHANA WAS BEING WORSHIPPED, LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER WERE HEARD...
...AND IT STARTED RAINING HEAVILY.
INDRA IS ANGRY. WE SHOULDN'T HAVE WORSHIPPED GOVARDHANA.

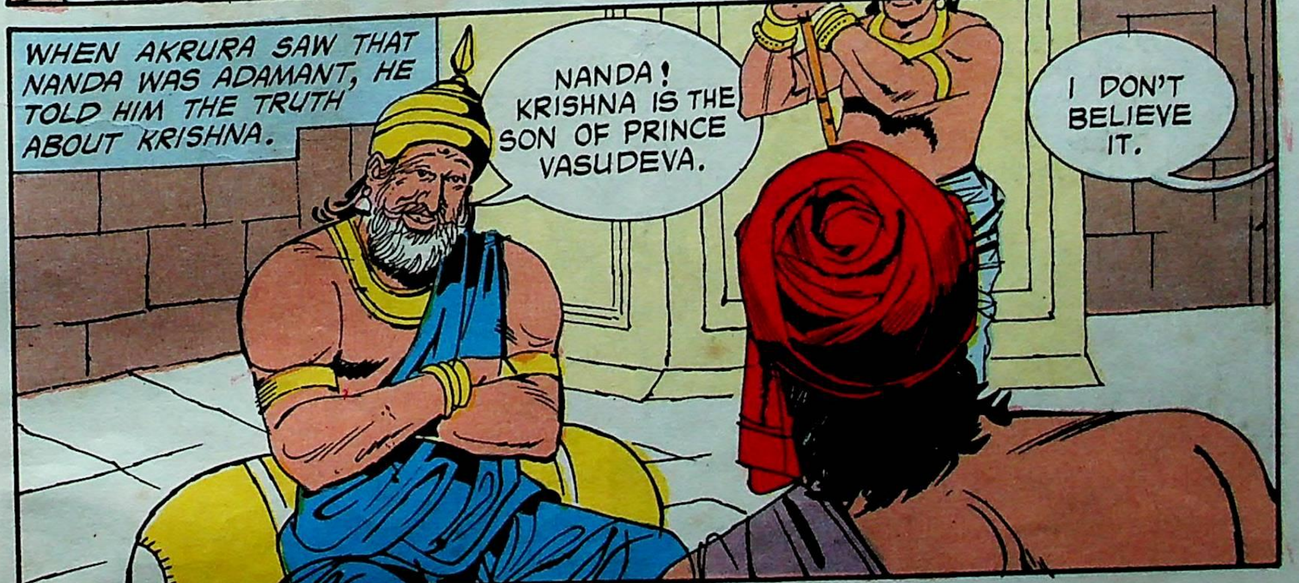

COME MY PEOPLE, FOLLOW ME.
SUDDENLY A RUMBLING SOUND WAS HEARD.
GOVARDHANA IS MOVING!
LOOK! IT'S RISING!
BRING YOUR CATTLE WITH YOU AND TAKE SHELTER. IT IS DRY HERE.
IT'S A MIRACLE! KRISHNA IS HOLDING THE MIGHTY GOVARDHANA ON HIS LITTLE FINGER!
KRISHNA SHELTERED THEM FOR SEVEN DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS TILL INDRA'S FURY WAS SPENT.

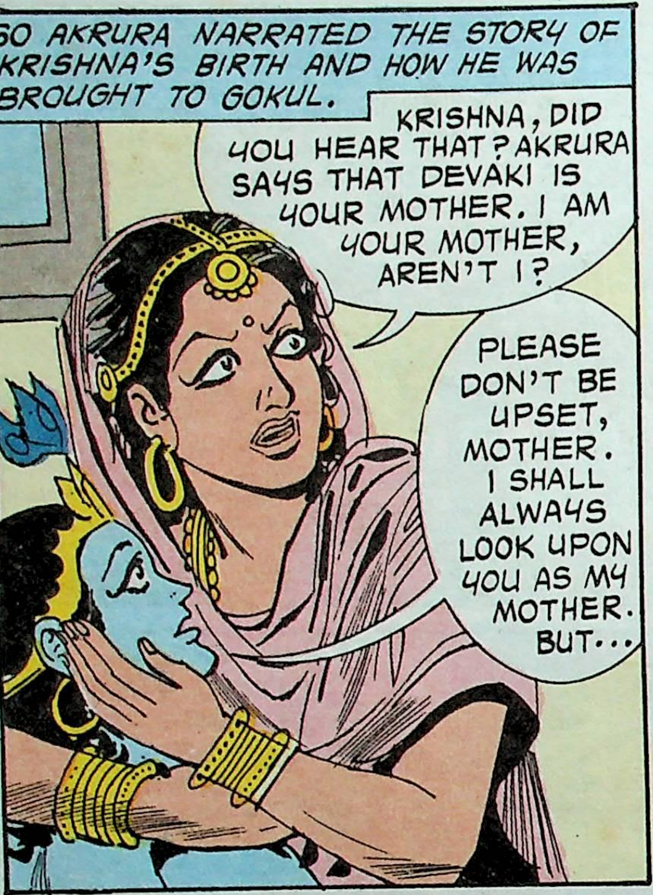

WHEN NEWS OF KRISHNA'S DEEDS REACHED MATHURA—
PRADYOTA! I HEAR THAT KRISHNA HELD THE MIGHTY GOVARDHANA ON HIS LITTLE FINGER.
SO THEY SAY, MY LORD!
YOU FOOL! WHY HAVE YOU LET HIM LIVE SO LONG? DIDN'T I ORDER YOU TO HAVE HIM KILLED SOMEHOW?
I HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING. EVEN THE MAD BULL, ARISHTA, AND THE WILD HORSE, KESHI.
KAMSA WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN—
HAVE IT ANNOUNCED THAT IN A FORTNIGHT I WILL PERFORM THE BOW SACRIFICE...
...AND...INVITE ALL, INCLUDING KRISHNA. YOU MUST SEE TO IT THAT HE DOES NOT RETURN ALIVE.
WHEN PRADYOTA LEFT, KAMSA SENT FOR CHANURA.
CHANURA! IF KRISHNA IS NOT KILLED BY PRADYOTA, CHALLENGE HIM TO A MATCH AND DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE ALIVE.

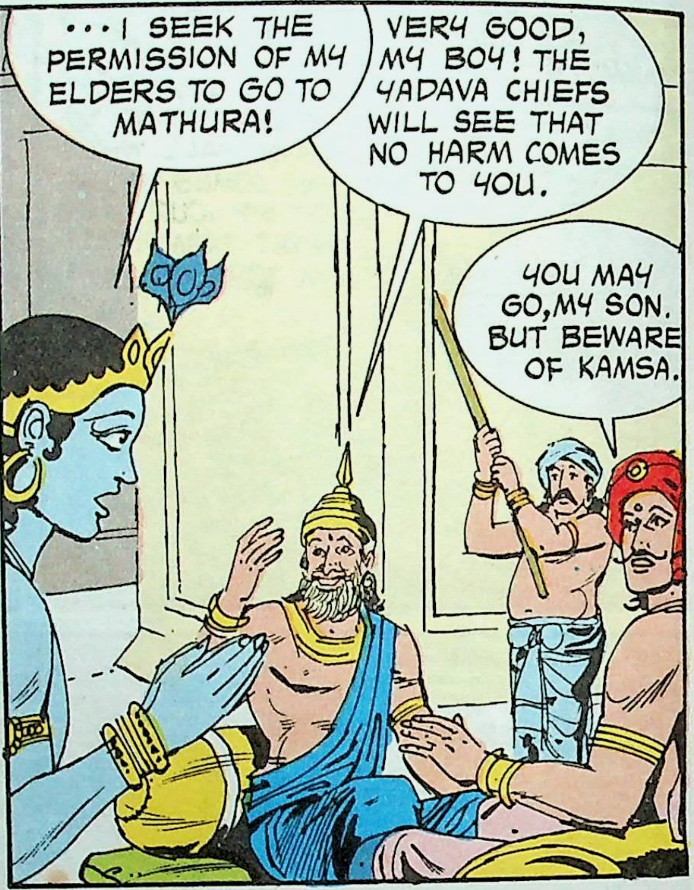

HE ALSO SUMMONED THE CHIEF OF MAHUTS.
YOU WILL STAND AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE YAGNA HALL. WHEN KRISHNA COMES THERE SEE THAT YOUR ELEPHANT TRAMPLES HIM TO DEATH.

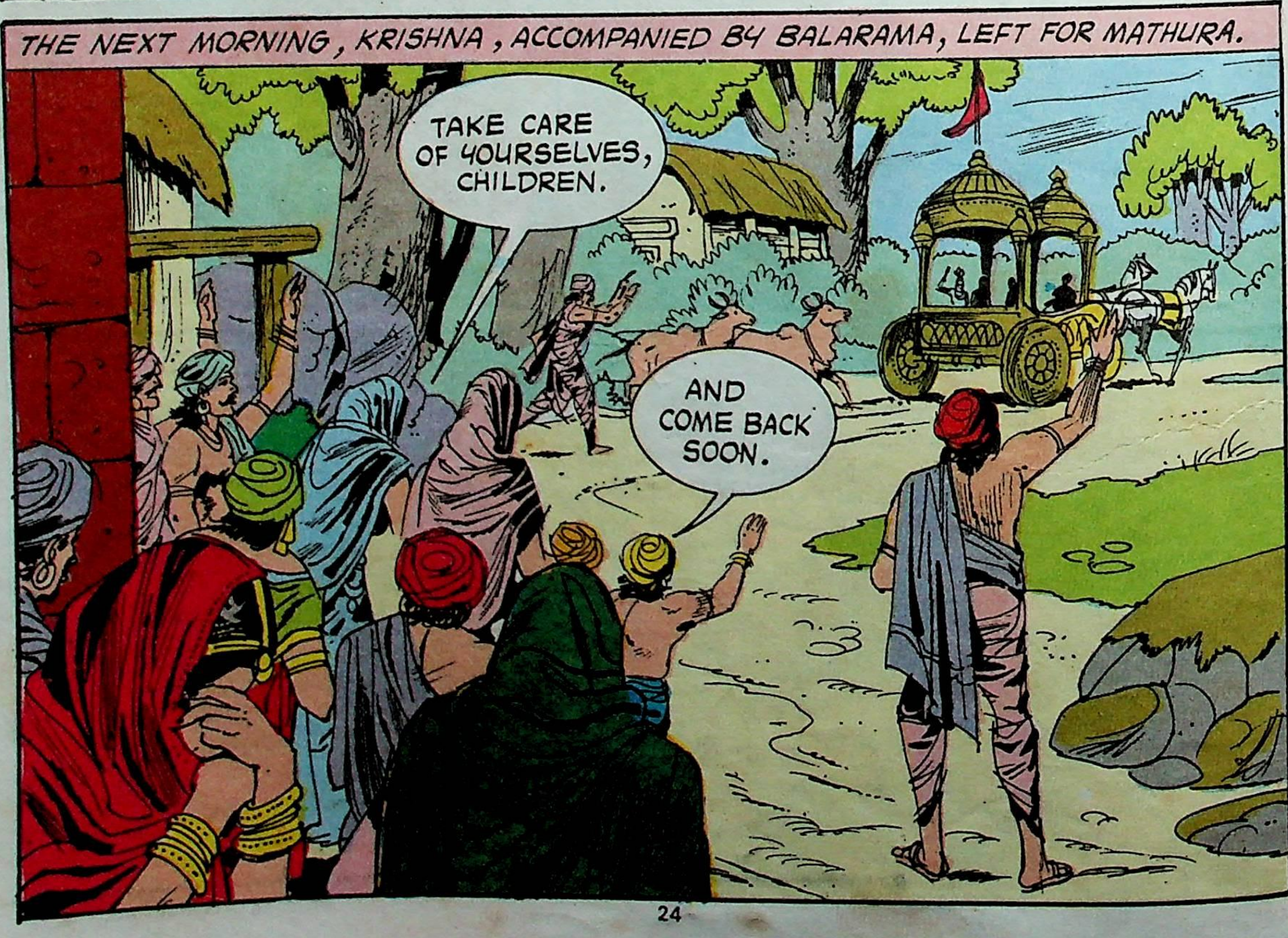

THEN HE SENT FOR THE WISE AKRURA.
I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO KNOW OF KRISHNA. ASK HIM TO COME TO MATHURA, FOR THE BOW SACRIFICE.
AKRURA SET OUT ON HIS MISSION.


AT VRINDAVAN—
YOU MUST PERMIT KRISHNA TO COME TO MATHURA.
NO, AKRURA I DON'T TRUST KAMSA. I WILL NOT SEND MY SON.


WHEN AKRURA SAW THAT NANDA WAS ADAMANT, HE TOLD HIM THE TRUTH ABOUT KRISHNA.
NANDA! KRISHNA IS THE SON OF PRINCE VASUDEVA.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.


SO AKRURA NARRATED THE STORY OF KRISHNA'S BIRTH AND HOW HE WAS BROUGHT TO GOKUL.
KRISHNA, DID YOU HEAR THAT? AKRURA SAYS THAT DEVAKI IS YOUR MOTHER. I AM YOUR MOTHER, AREN'T I?
PLEASE DON'T BE UPSET, MOTHER. I SHALL ALWAYS LOOK UPON YOU AS MY MOTHER. BUT...


...I SEEK THE PERMISSION OF MY ELDERS TO GO TO MATHURA!
VERY GOOD, MY BOY! THE YADAVA CHIEFS WILL SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU.
YOU MAY GO, MY SON. BUT BEWARE OF KAMSA.


THE NEXT MORNING, KRISHNA, ACCOMPANIED BY BALARAMA, LEFT FOR MATHURA.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, CHILDREN.
AND COME BACK SOON.

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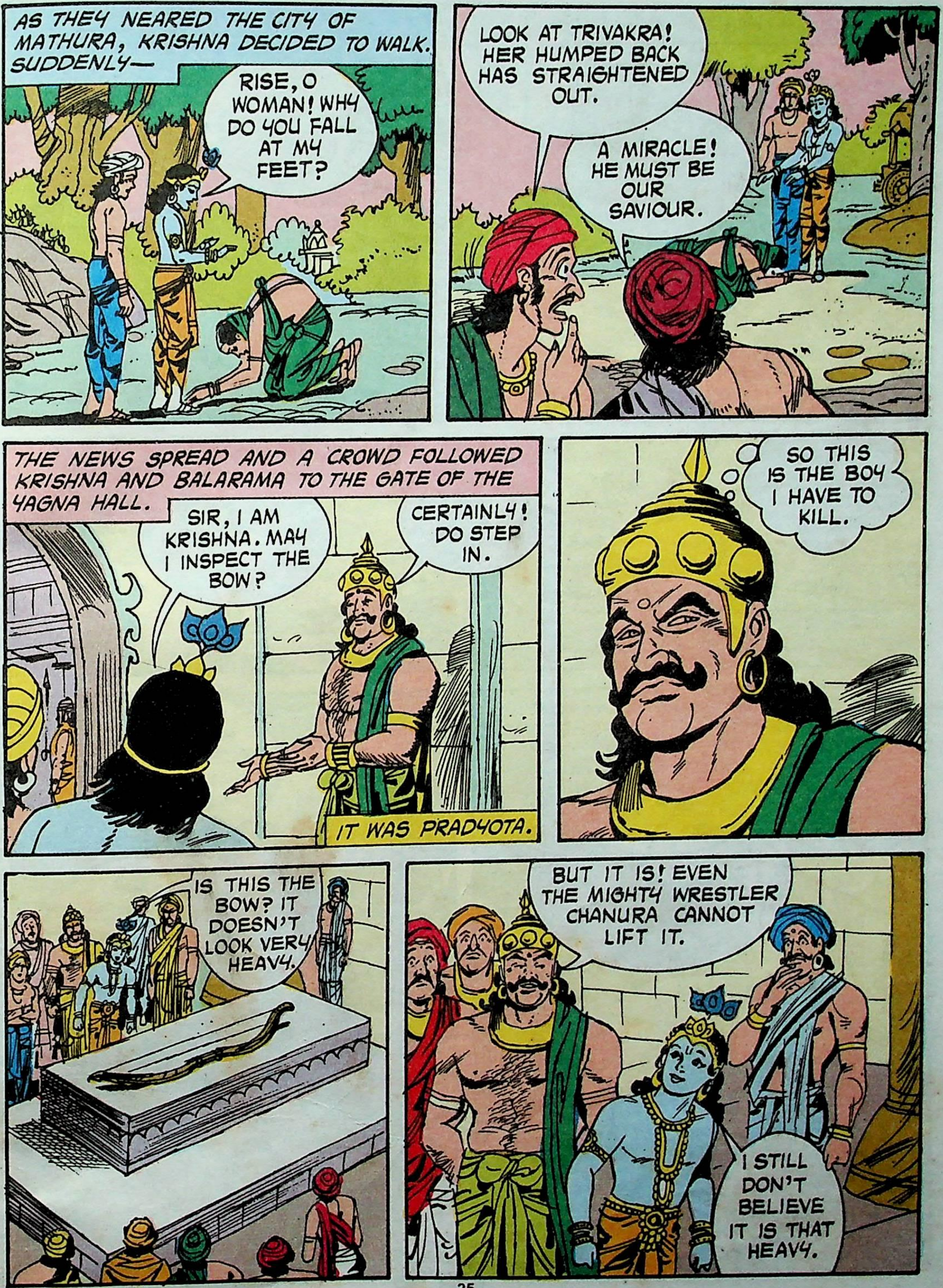
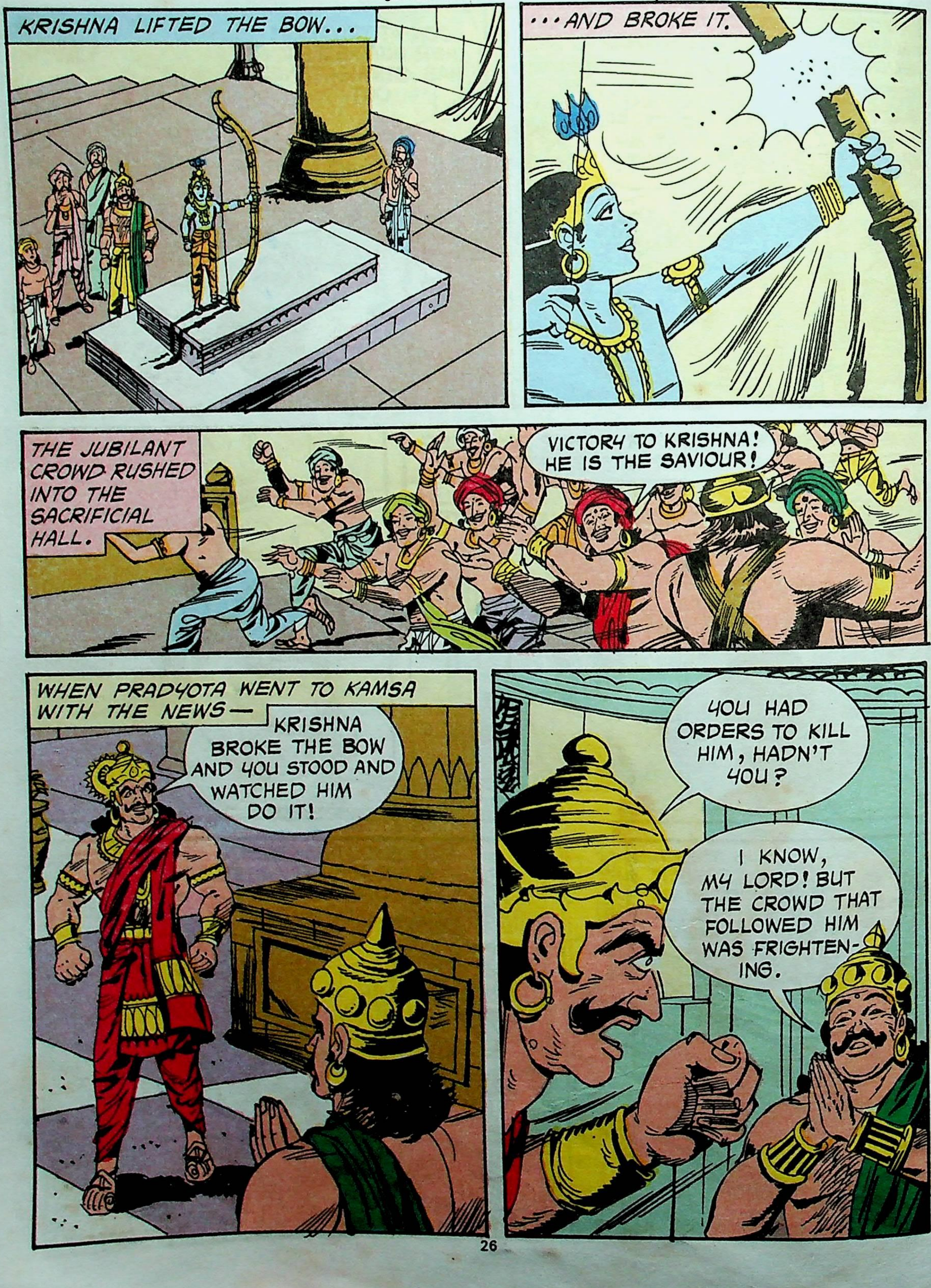
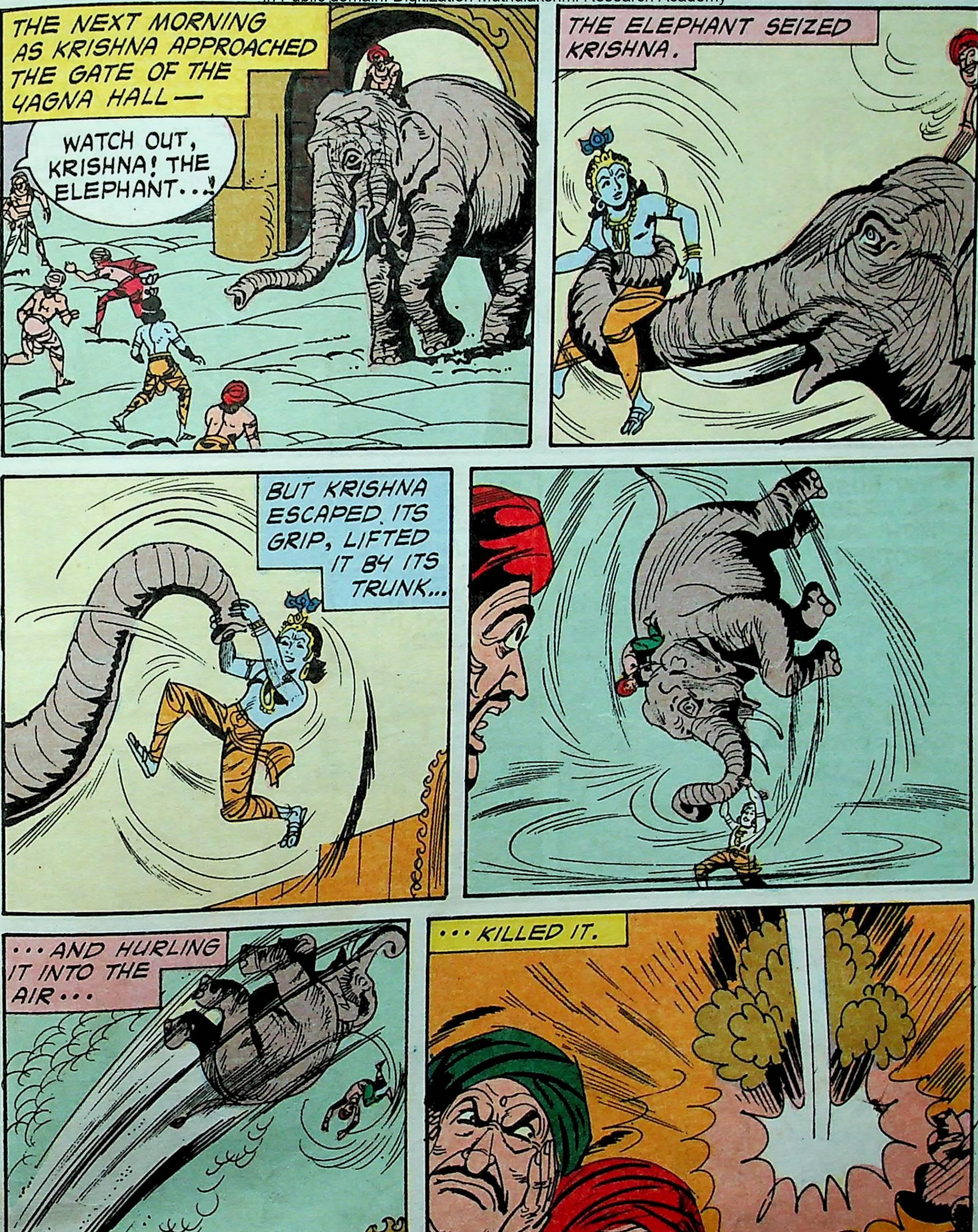

AS THEY NEARED THE CITY OF MATHURA, KRISHNA DECIDED TO WALK. SUDDENLY—
RISE, O WOMAN! WHY DO YOU FALL AT MY FEET?
LOOK AT TRIVAKRA! HER HUMPED BACK HAS STRAIGHTENED OUT.
A MIRACLE! HE MUST BE OUR SAVIOUR.
THE NEWS SPREAD AND A CROWD FOLLOWED KRISHNA AND BALARAMA TO THE GATE OF THE YAGNA HALL.
SIR, I AM KRISHNA. MAY I INSPECT THE BOW?
CERTAINLY! DO STEP IN.
IT WAS PRADYOTA.
SO THIS IS THE BOY I HAVE TO KILL.
IS THIS THE BOW? IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY HEAVY.
BUT IT IS! EVEN THE MIGHTY WRESTLER CHANURA CANNOT LIFT IT.
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT IS THAT HEAVY.


KRISHNA LIFTED THE BOW...
...AND BROKE IT.
THE JUBILANT CROWD RUSHED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL HALL.
VICTORY TO KRISHNA! HE IS THE SAVIOUR!
WHEN PRADYOTA WENT TO KAMSA WITH THE NEWS—
KRISHNA BROKE THE BOW AND YOU STOOD AND WATCHED HIM DO IT!
YOU HAD ORDERS TO KILL HIM, HADN'T YOU?
I KNOW, MY LORD! BUT THE CROWD THAT FOLLOWED HIM WAS FRIGHTENING.


THE NEXT MORNING AS KRISHNA APPROACHED THE GATE OF THE YAGNA HALL—
WATCH OUT, KRISHNA! THE ELEPHANT...!
THE ELEPHANT SEIZED KRISHNA.
BUT KRISHNA ESCAPED ITS GRIP, LIFTED IT BY ITS TRUNK...
...AND HURLING IT INTO THE AIR...
...KILLED IT.

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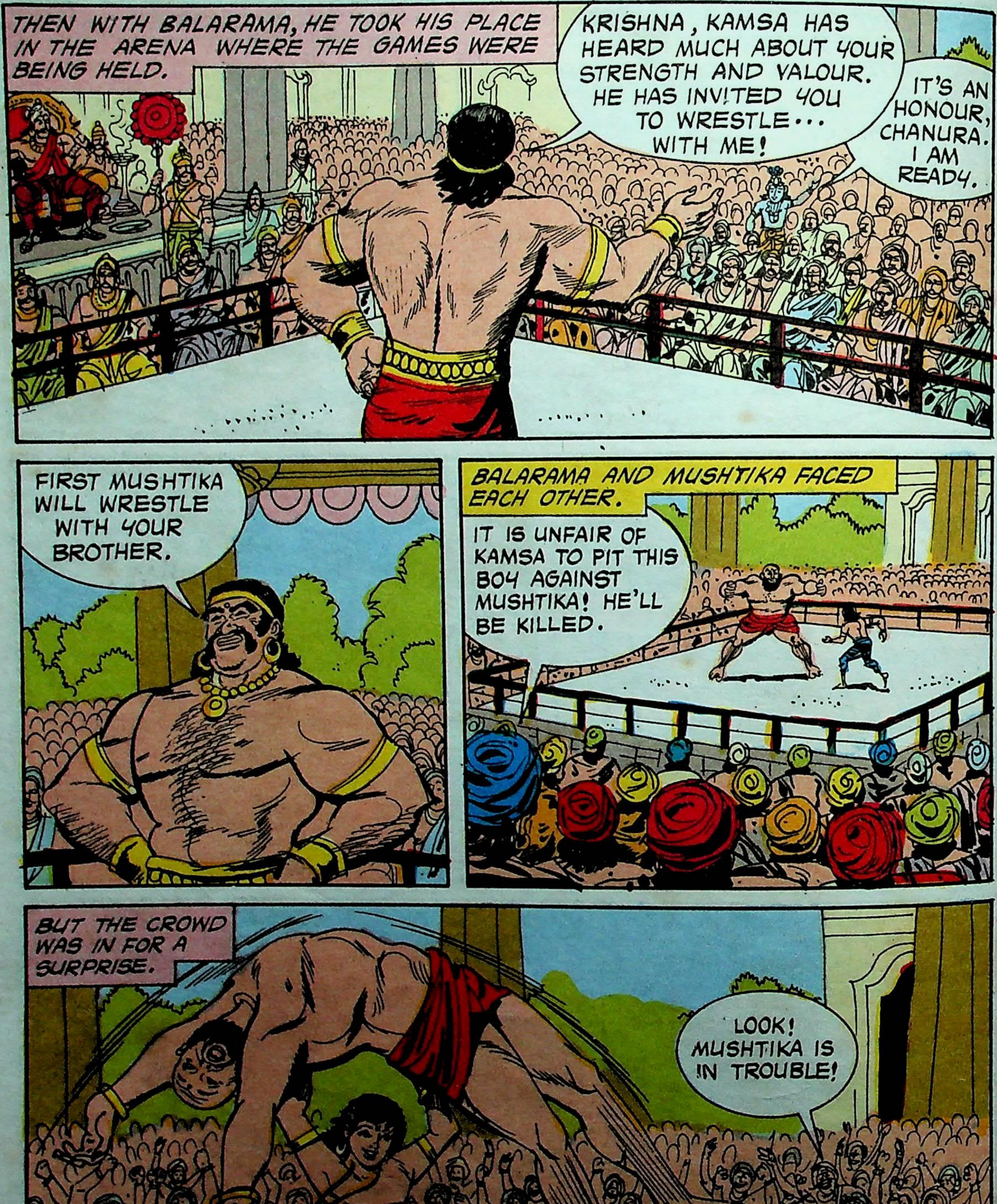
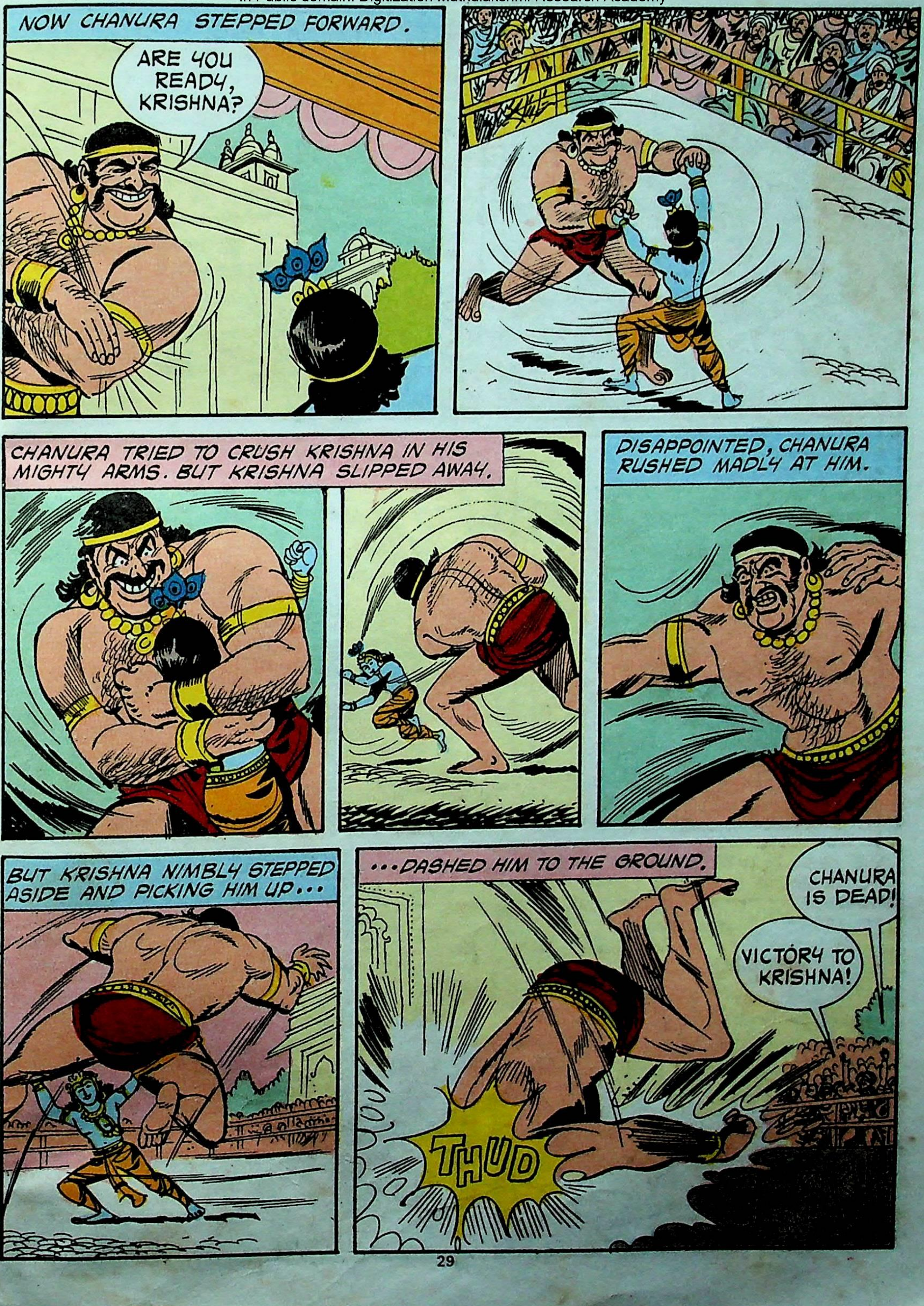
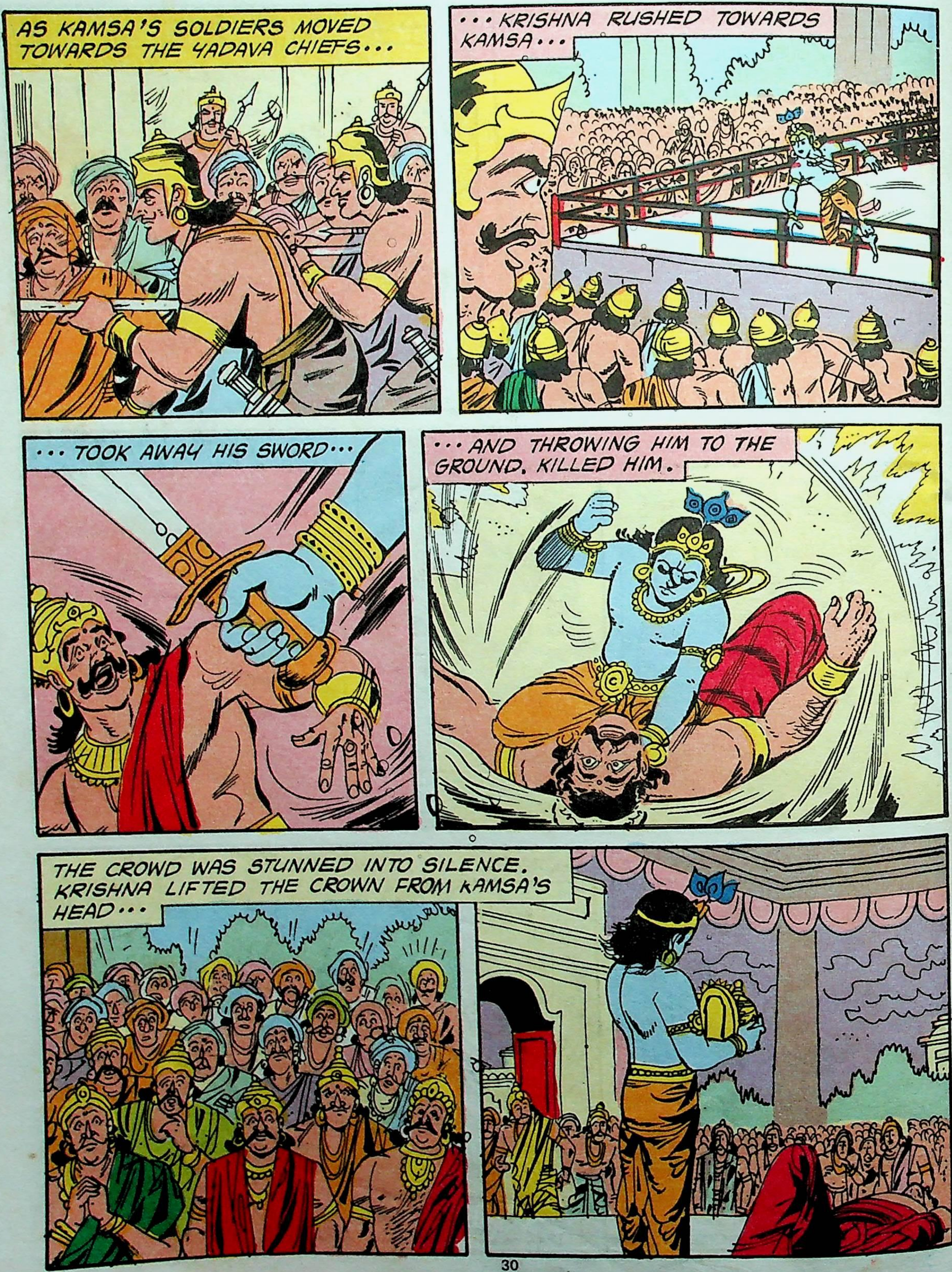

THEN WITH BALARAMA, HE TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE ARENA WHERE THE GAMES WERE BEING HELD.
KRISHNA, KAMSA HAS HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOUR STRENGTH AND VALOUR. HE HAS INVITED YOU TO WRESTLE... WITH ME!
IT'S AN HONOUR, CHANURA. I AM READY.
FIRST MUSHTIKA WILL WRESTLE WITH YOUR BROTHER.
BALARAMA AND MUSHTIKA FACED EACH OTHER.
IT IS UNFAIR OF KAMSA TO PIT THIS BOY AGAINST MUSHTIKA! HE'LL BE KILLED.
BUT THE CROWD WAS IN FOR A SURPRISE.
LOOK! MUSHTIKA IS IN TROUBLE!
IT WAS BALARAMA WHO KILLED MUSHTIKA.


NOW CHANURA STEPPED FORWARD.
ARE YOU READY, KRISHNA?
CHANURA TRIED TO CRUSH KRISHNA IN HIS MIGHTY ARMS. BUT KRISHNA SLIPPED AWAY.
DISAPPOINTED, CHANURA RUSHED MADLY AT HIM.
BUT KRISHNA NIMBLY STEPPED ASIDE AND PICKING HIM UP...
...DASHED HIM TO THE GROUND.
CHANURA IS DEAD!
VICTORY TO KRISHNA!
THUD


AS KAMSA'S SOLDIERS MOVED TOWARDS THE YADAVA CHIEFS...
...KRISHNA RUSHED TOWARDS KAMSA...
...TOOK AWAY HIS SWORD...
...AND THROWING HIM TO THE GROUND, KILLED HIM.
THE CROWD WAS STUNNED INTO SILENCE. KRISHNA LIFTED THE CROWN FROM KAMSA'S HEAD...

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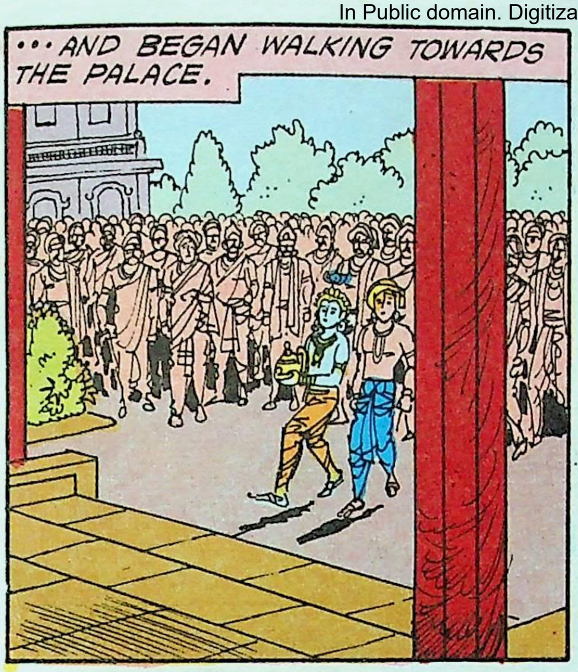
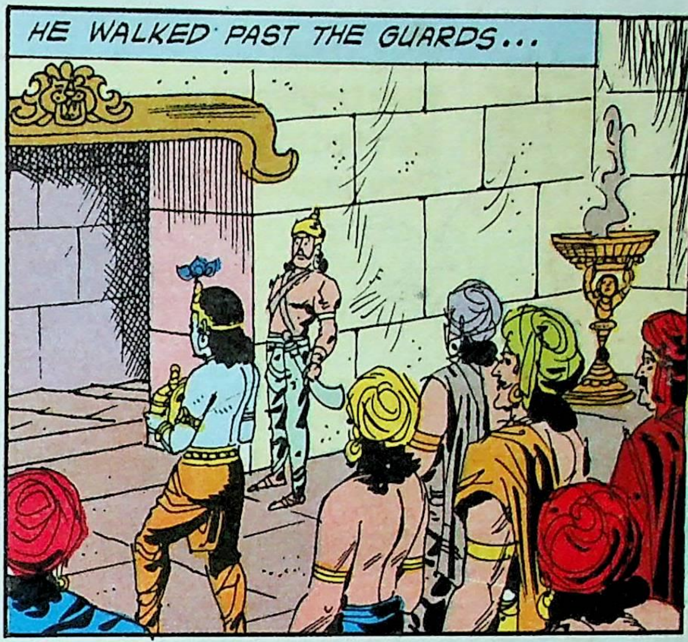
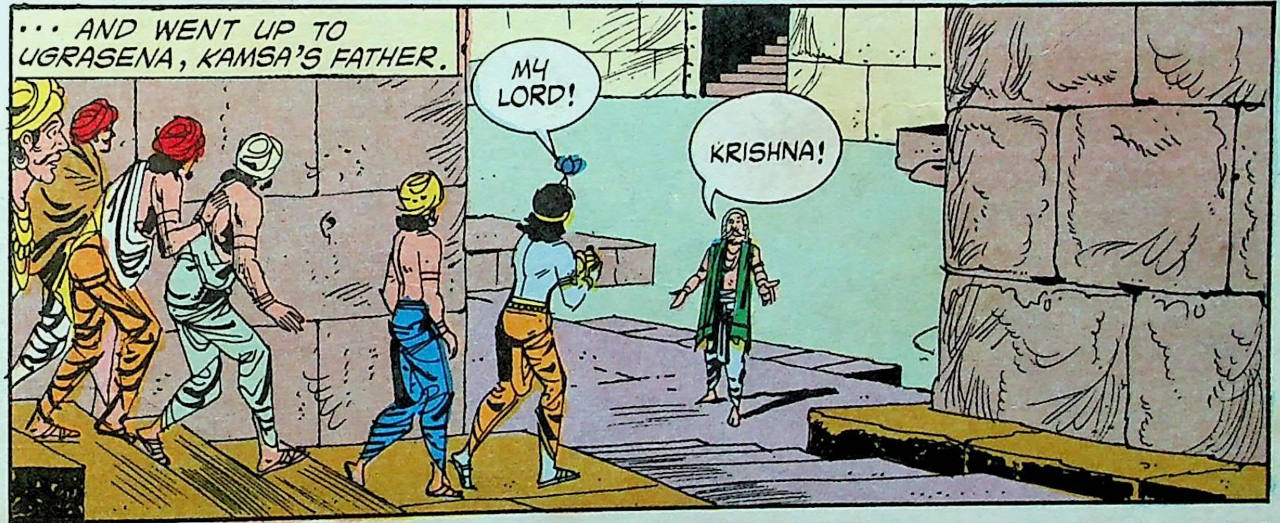
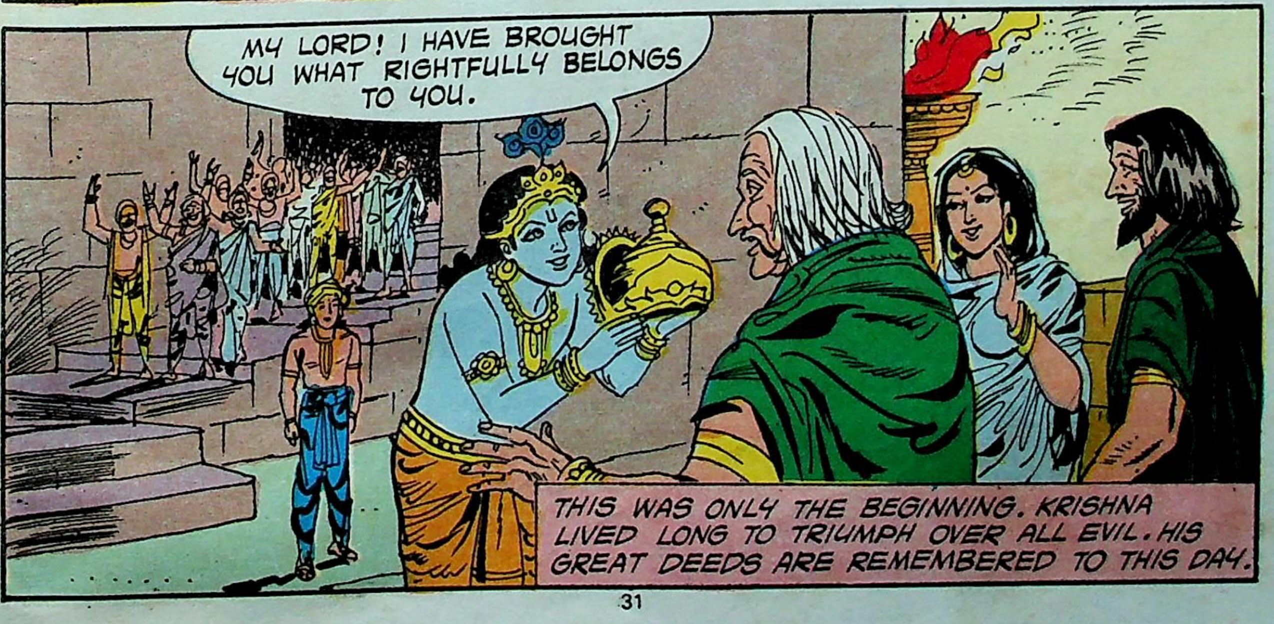

...AND BEGAN WALKING TOWARDS THE PALACE.


HE WALKED PAST THE GUARDS...


... AND WENT UP TO UGRASENA, KAMSA'S FATHER.
MY LORD!
KRISHNA!


MY LORD! I HAVE BROUGHT YOU WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO YOU.
THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. KRISHNA LIVED LONG TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL EVIL. HIS GREAT DEEDS ARE REMEMBERED TO THIS DAY.

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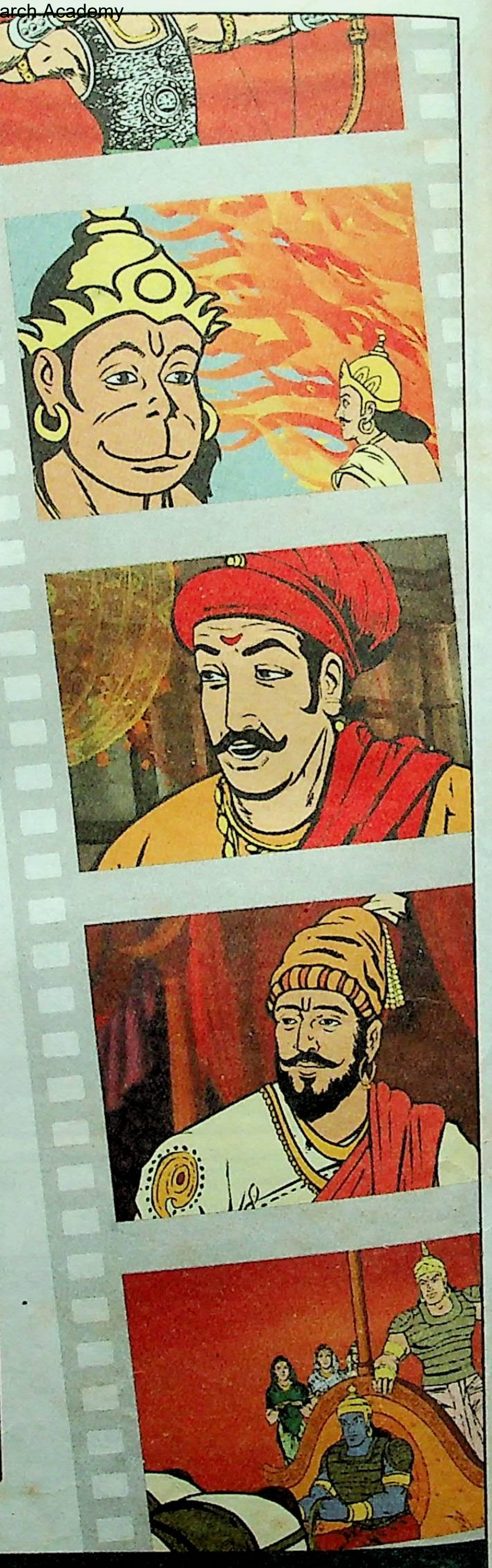

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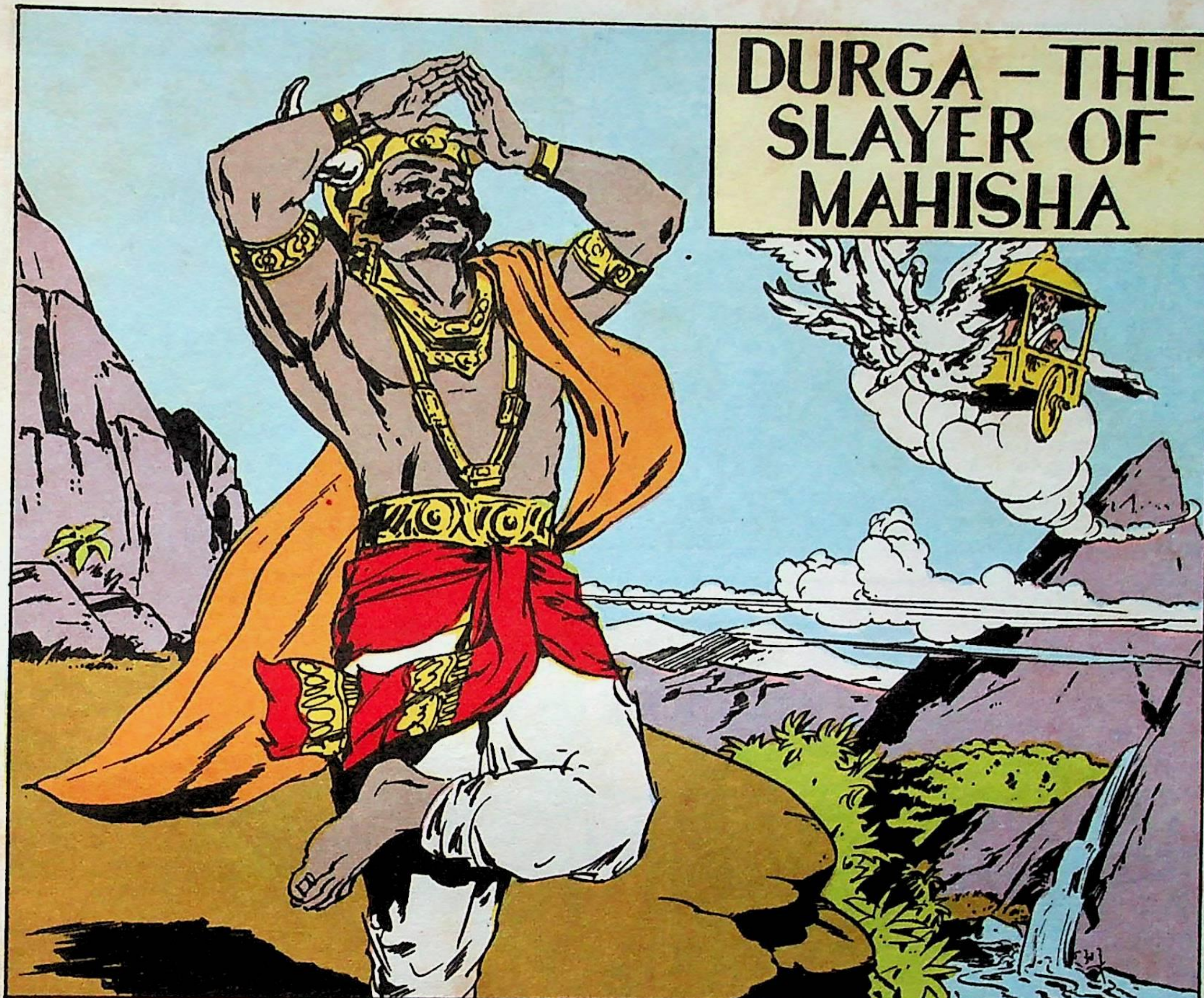
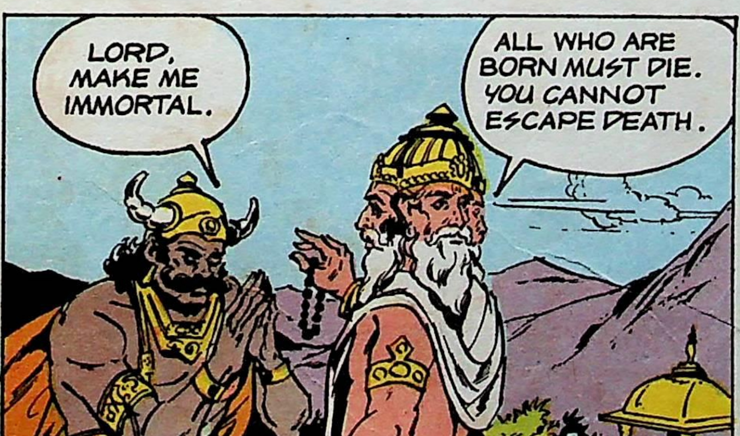
This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the *Durga-Saptashati* of the Markandeya Purana.

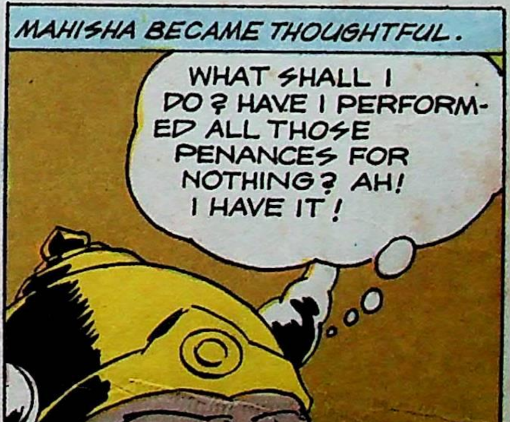
DURGA – THE SLAYER OF MAHISHA

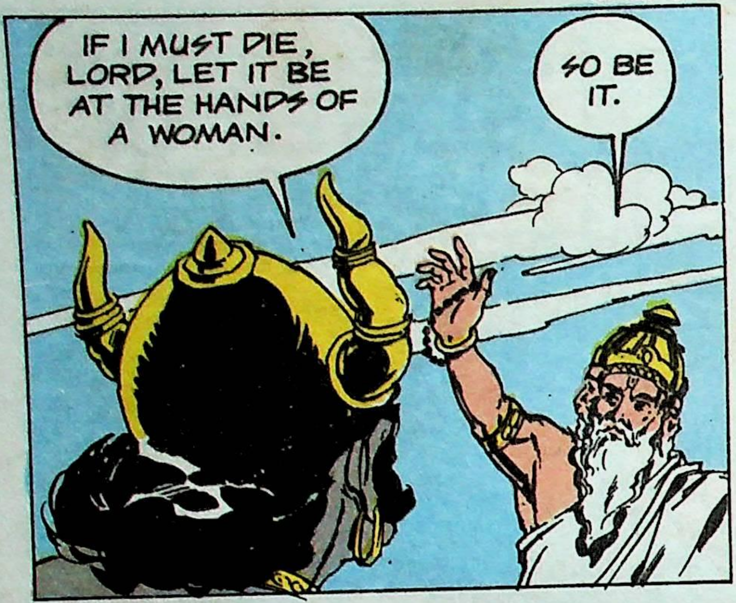


THE ASURA, MAHISHA, ONCE PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO PROPITIATE BRAHMA. PLEASED WITH HIS AUSTERITIES, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

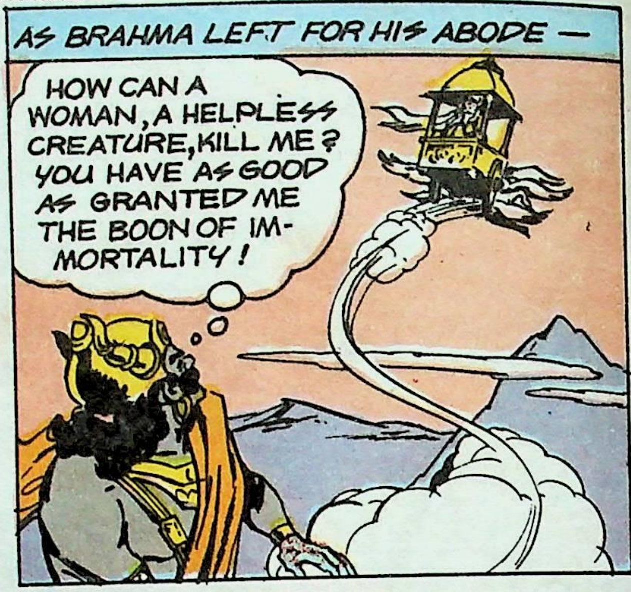

LORD, MAKE ME IMMORTAL.
ALL WHO ARE BORN MUST DIE. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE DEATH.

MAHISHA BECAME THOUGHTFUL.

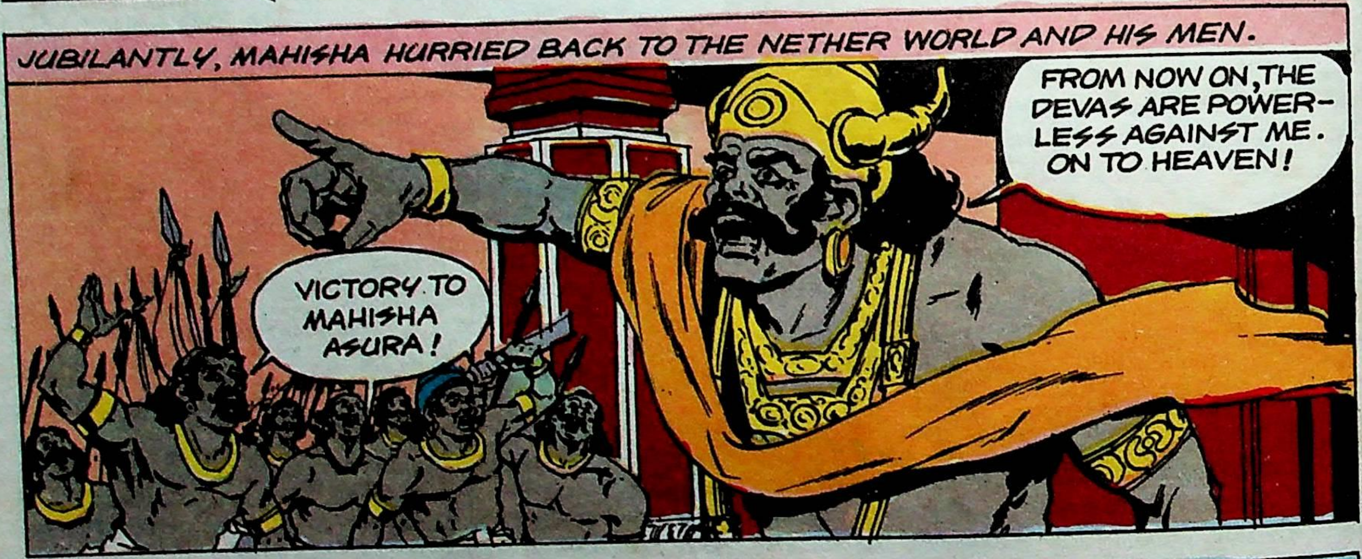

WHAT SHALL I DO? HAVE I PERFORMED ALL THOSE PENANCES FOR NOTHING? AH! I HAVE IT!


IF I MUST DIE, LORD, LET IT BE AT THE HANDS OF A WOMAN.
SO BE IT.

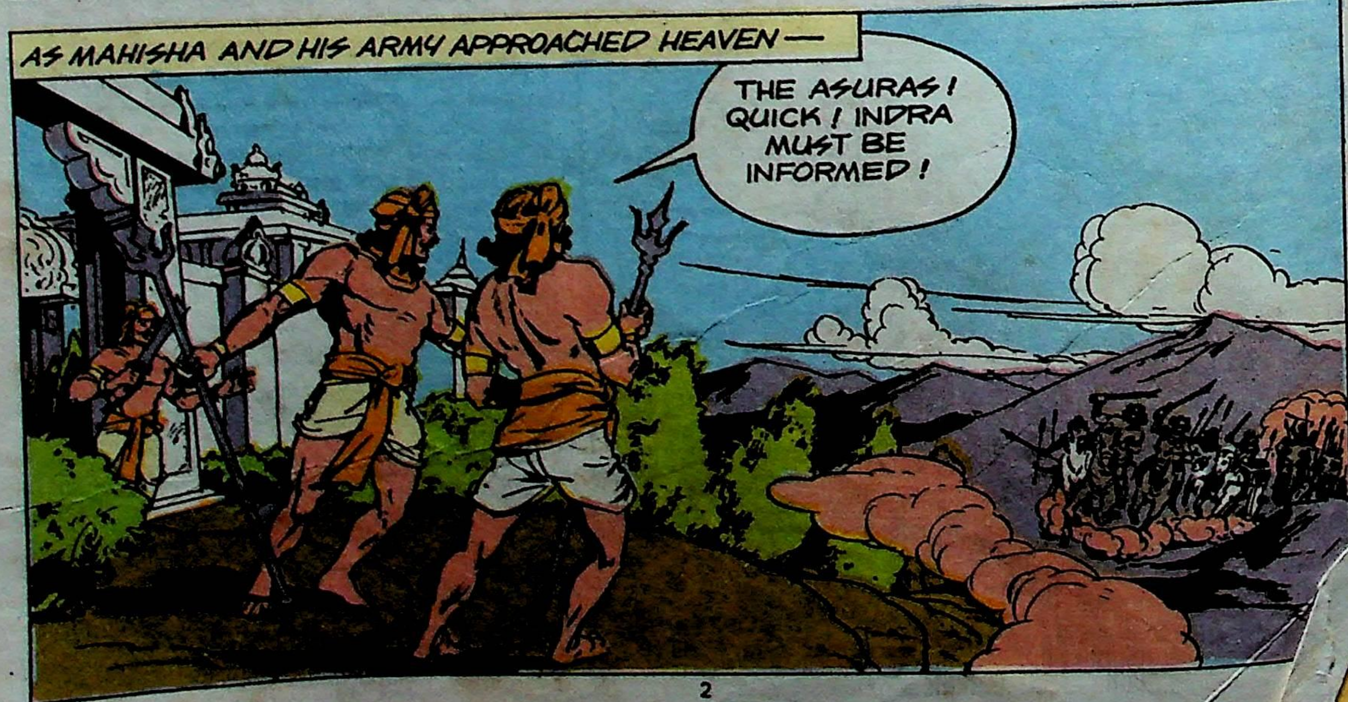
AS BRAHMA LEFT FOR HIS ABODE —

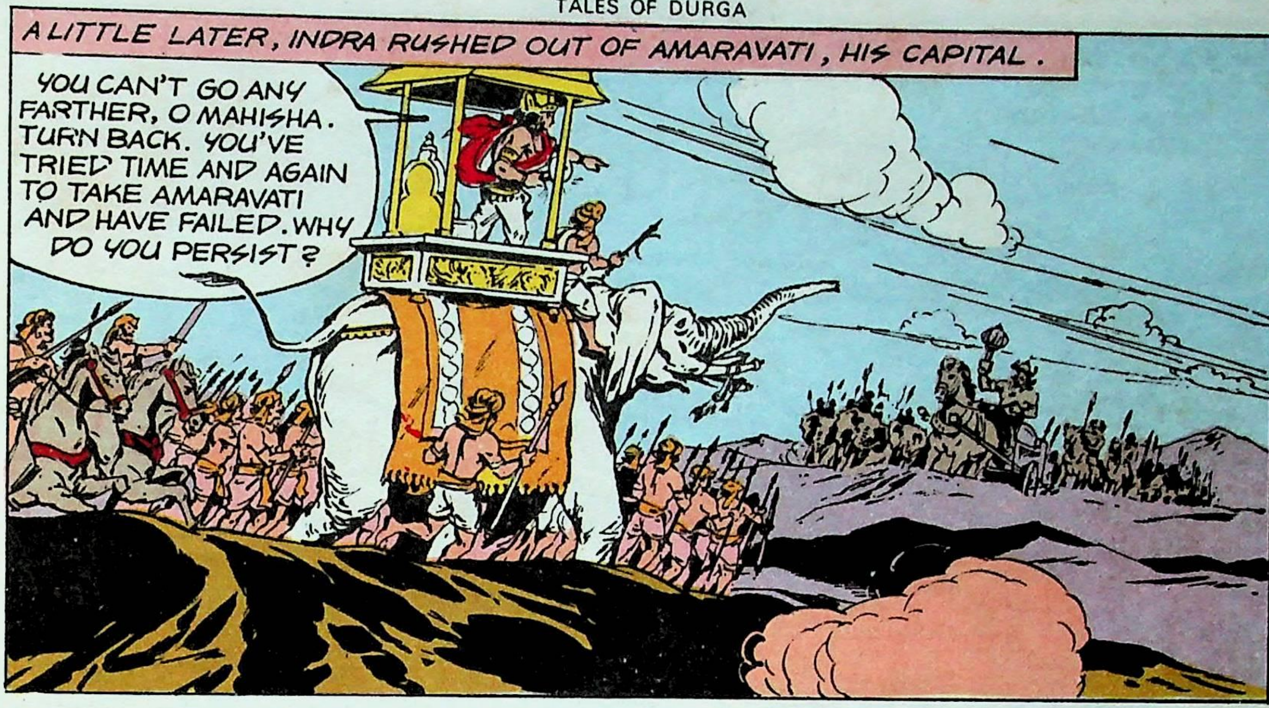

HOW CAN A WOMAN, A HELPLESS CREATURE, KILL ME? YOU HAVE AS GOOD AS GRANTED ME THE BOON OF IMMORTALITY!

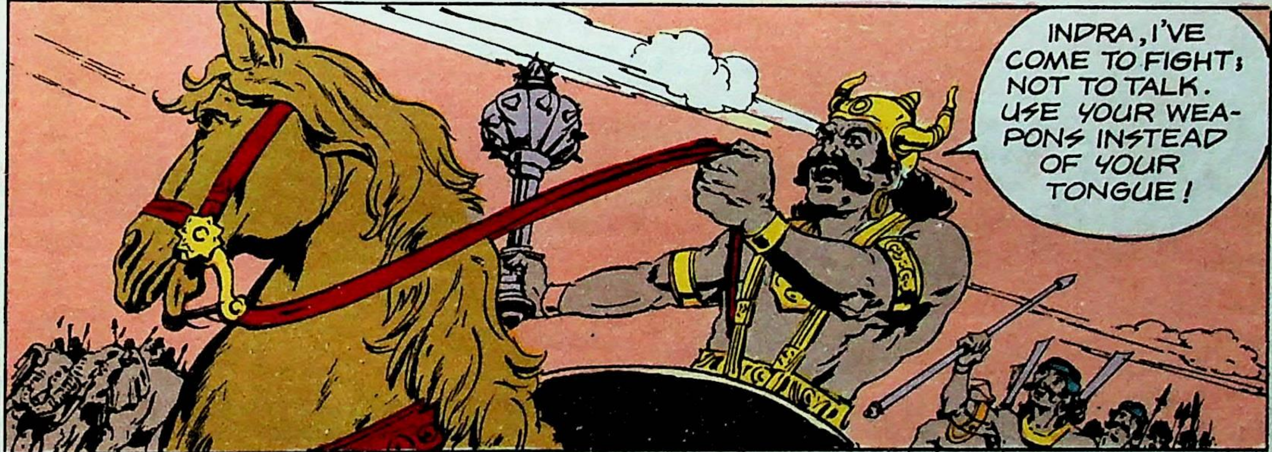
JUBILANTLY, MAHISHA HURRIED BACK TO THE NETHER WORLD AND HIS MEN.

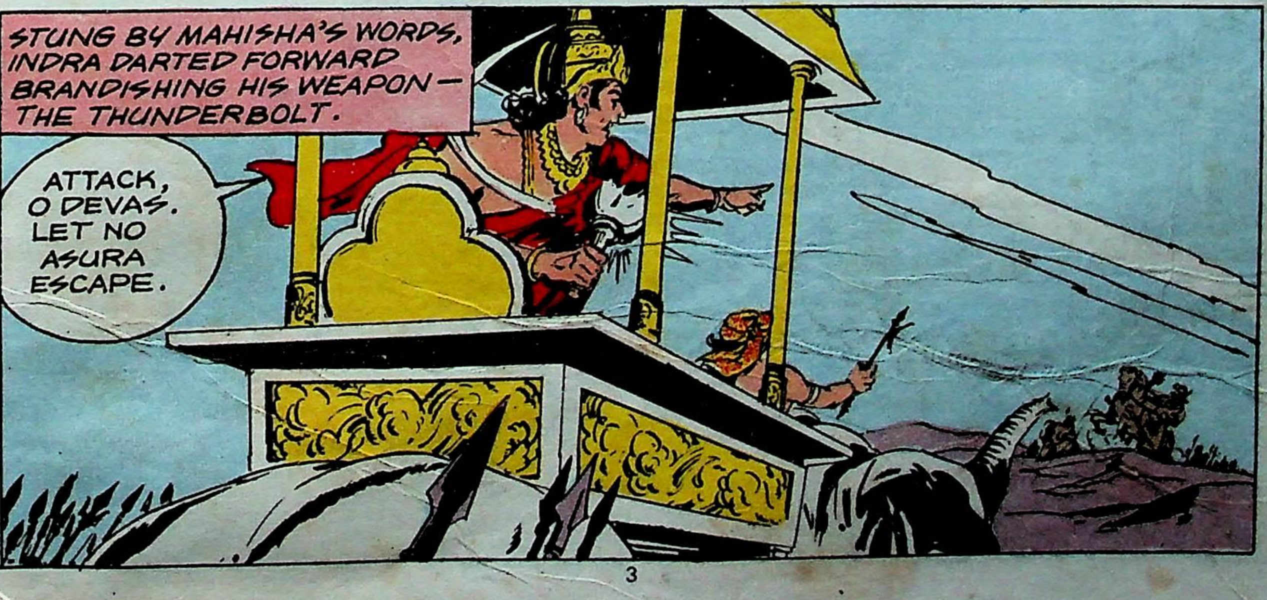

FROM NOW ON, THE DEVAS ARE POWERLESS AGAINST ME. ON TO HEAVEN!
VICTORY TO MAHISHA ASURA!

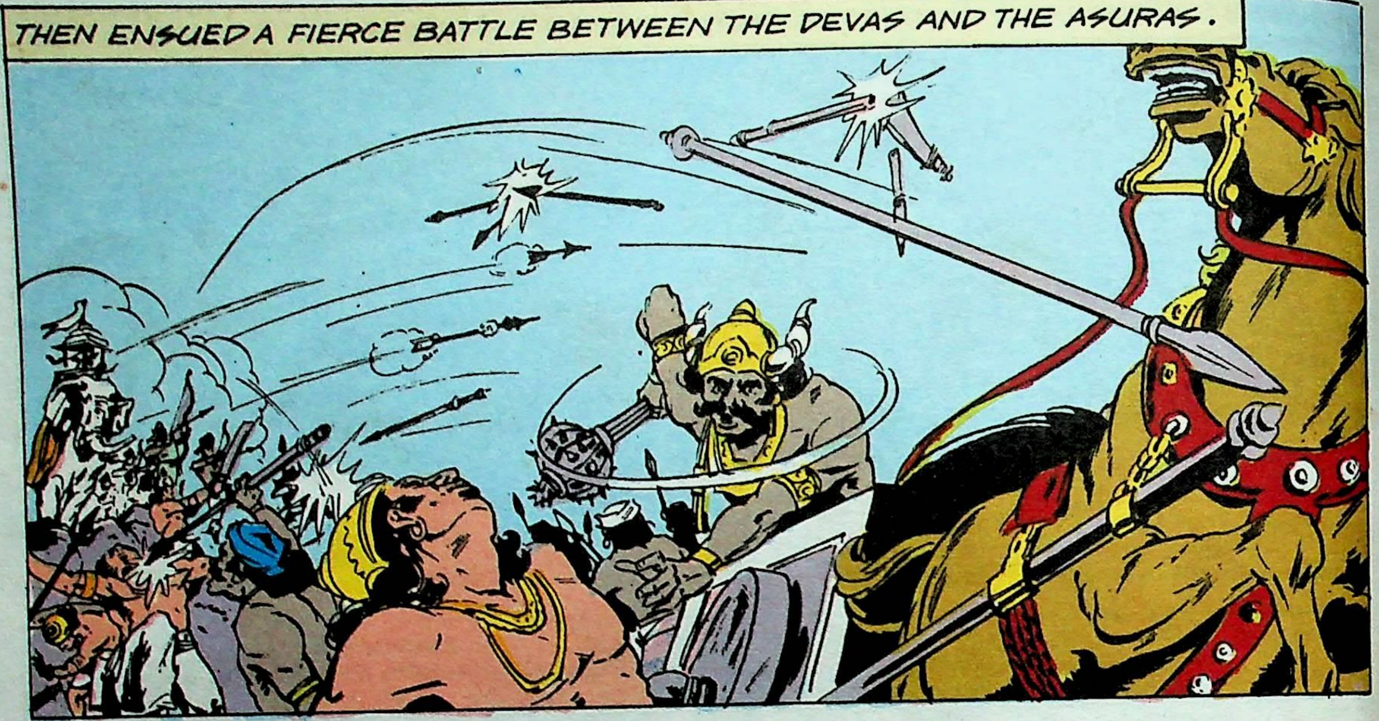
AS MAHISHA AND HIS ARMY APPROACHED HEAVEN —

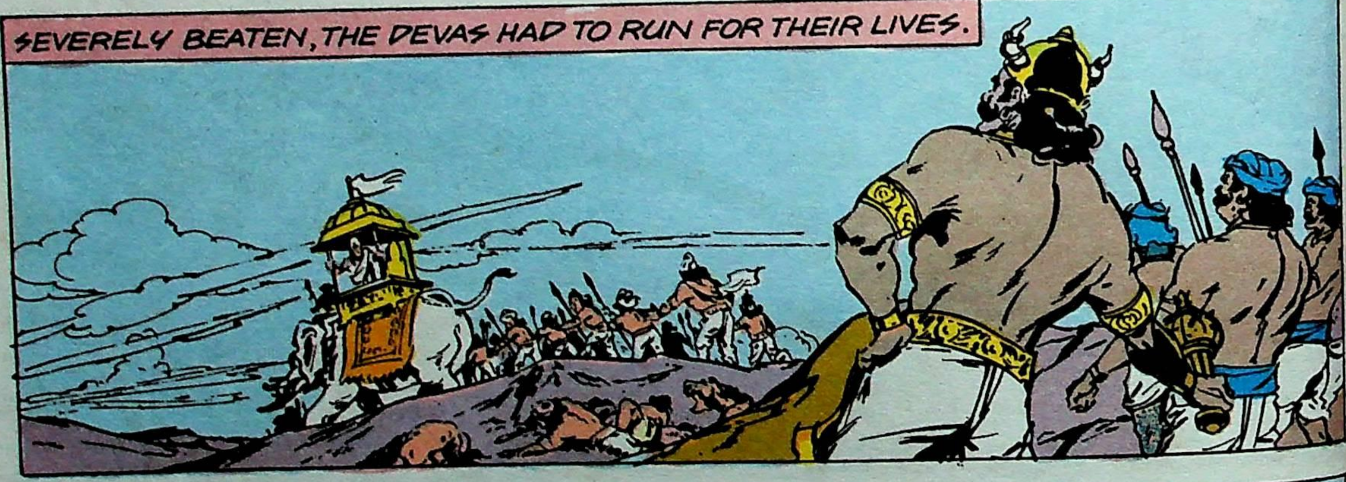

THE ASURAS! QUICK! INDRA MUST BE INFORMED!

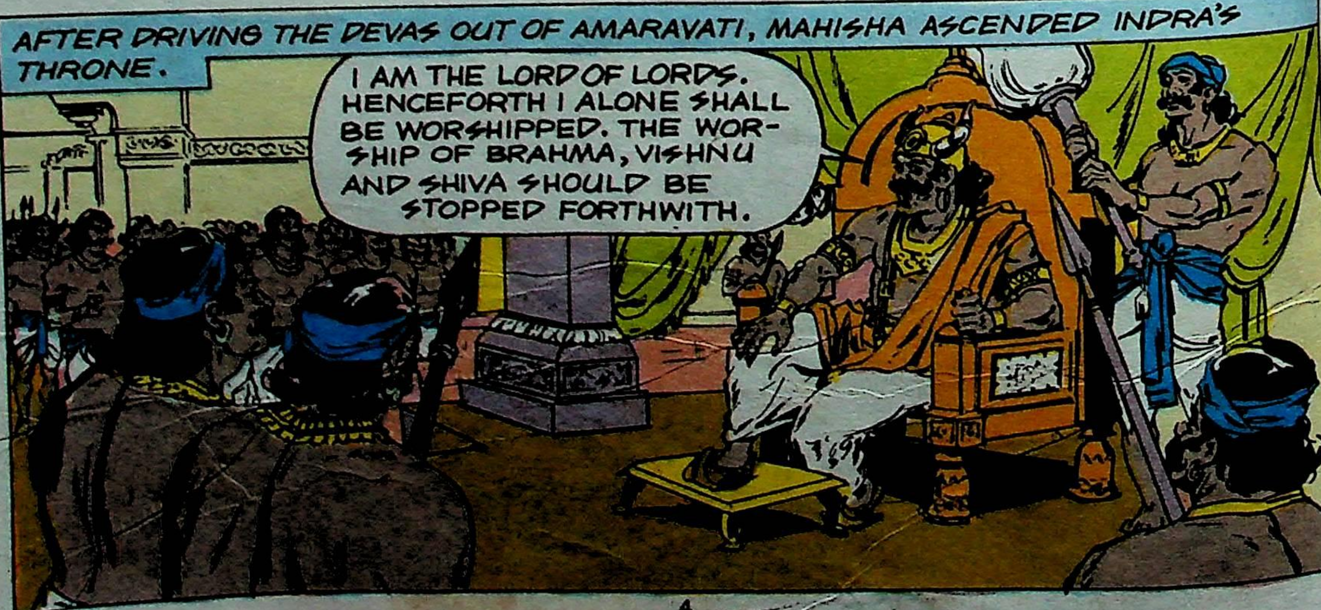

A LITTLE LATER, INDRA RUSHED OUT OF AMARAVATI, HIS CAPITAL.
YOU CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, O MAHISHA. TURN BACK. YOU'VE TRIED TIME AND AGAIN TO TAKE AMARAVATI AND HAVE FAILED. WHY DO YOU PERSIST?

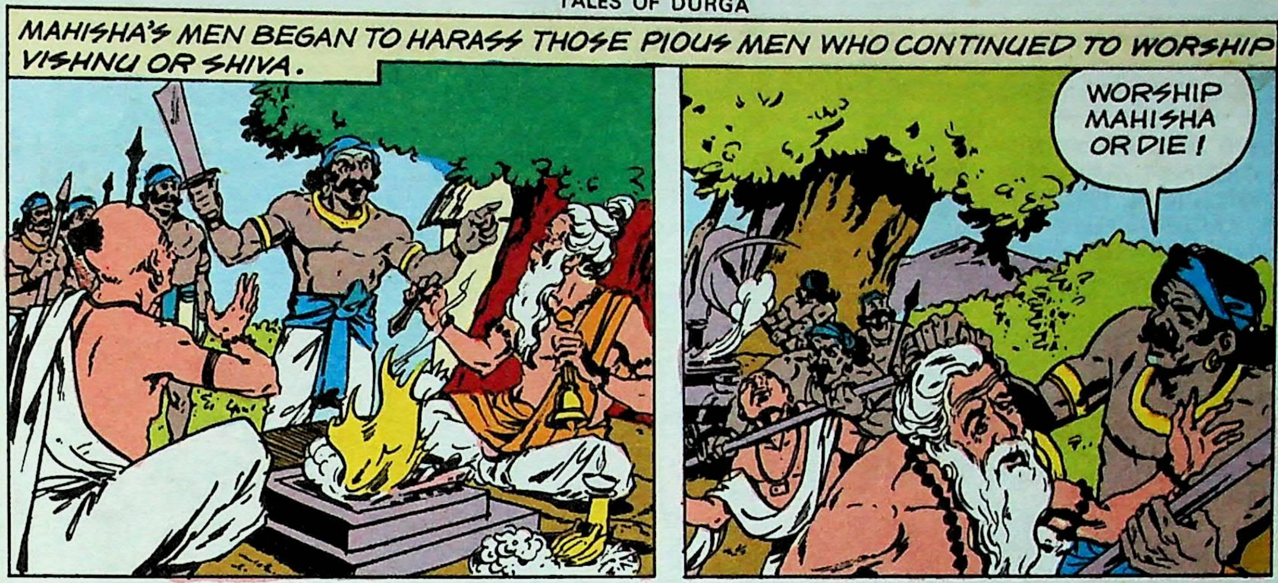

INDRA, I'VE COME TO FIGHT; NOT TO TALK. USE YOUR WEAPONS INSTEAD OF YOUR TONGUE!

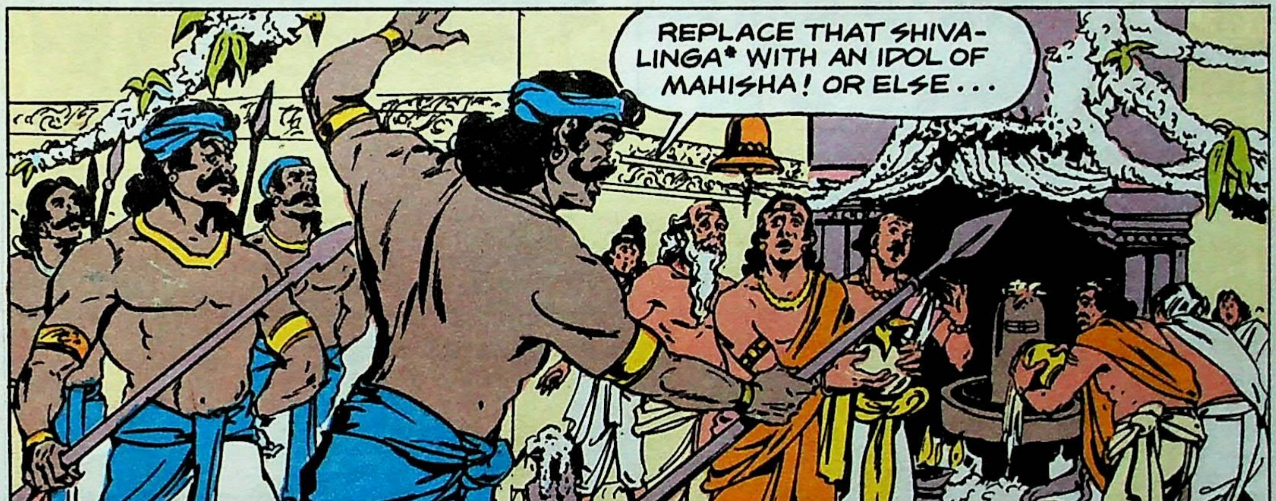

STUNG BY MAHISHA'S WORDS, INDRA DARTED FORWARD BRANDISHING HIS WEAPON — THE THUNDERBOLT.
ATTACK, O DEVAS. LET NO ASURA ESCAPE.

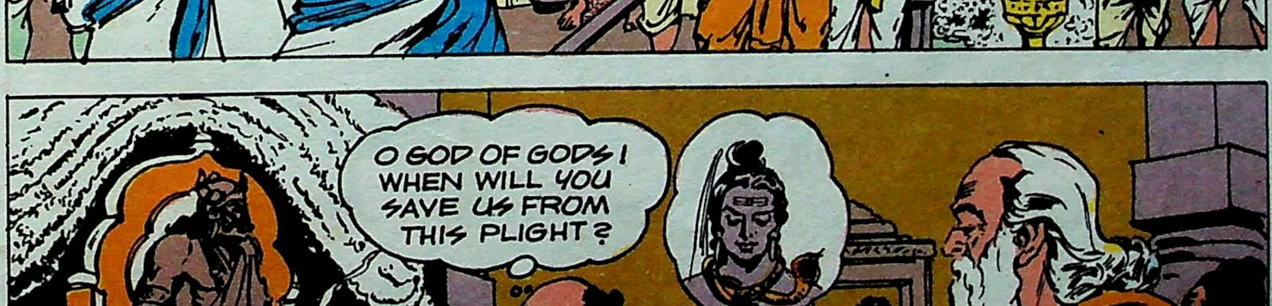

THEN ENSUED A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.


SEVERELY BEATEN, THE DEVAS HAD TO RUN FOR THEIR LIVES.

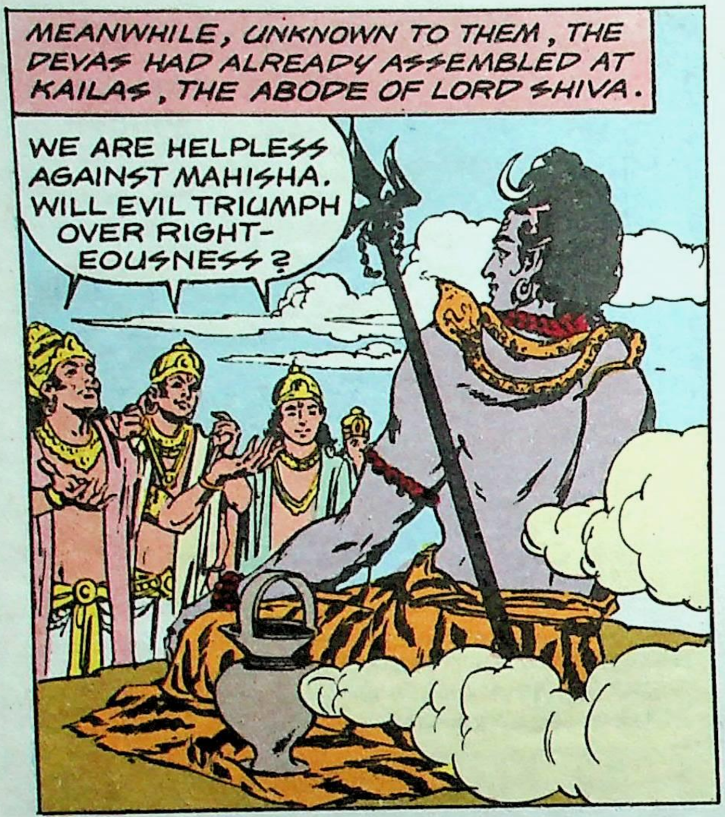

AFTER DRIVING THE DEVAS OUT OF AMARAVATI, MAHISHA ASCENDED INDRA'S THRONE.
I AM THE LORD OF LORDS. HENCEFORTH I ALONE SHALL BE WORSHIPPED. THE WORSHIP OF BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA SHOULD BE STOPPED FORTHWITH.

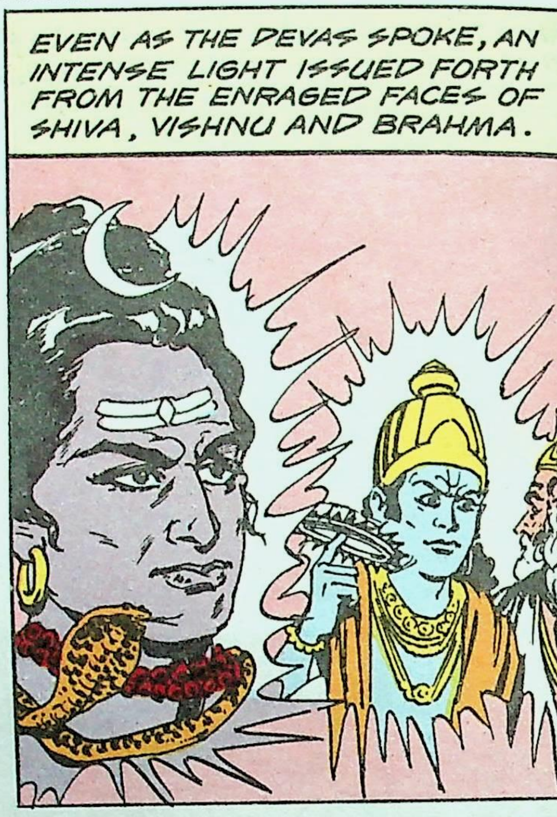

MAHISHA'S MEN BEGAN TO HARASS THOSE PIOUS MEN WHO CONTINUED TO WORSHIP VISHNU OR SHIVA.
WORSHIP MAHISHA OR DIE!

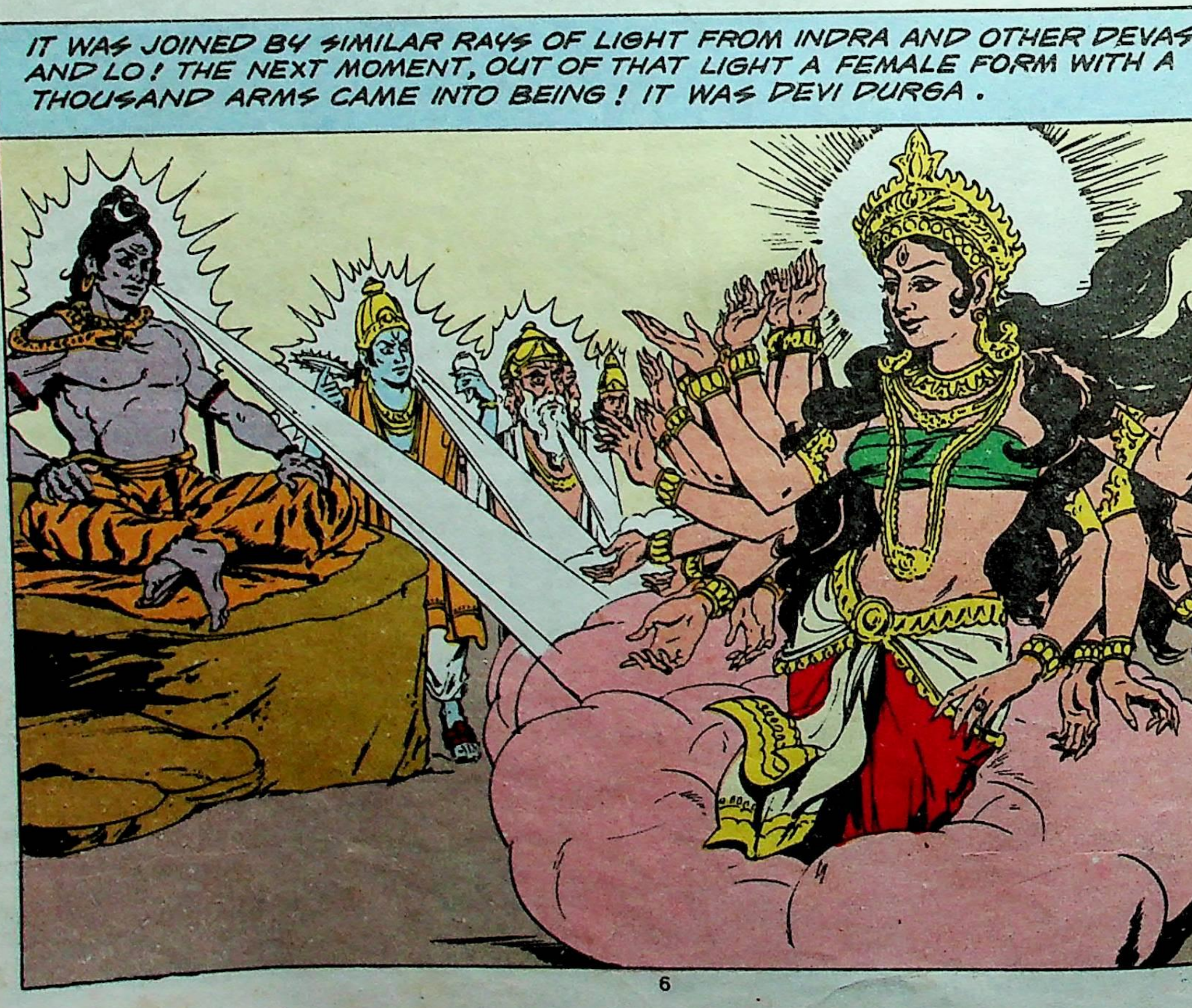

REPLACE THAT SHIVA-LINGA* WITH AN IDOL OF MAHISHA! OR ELSE...

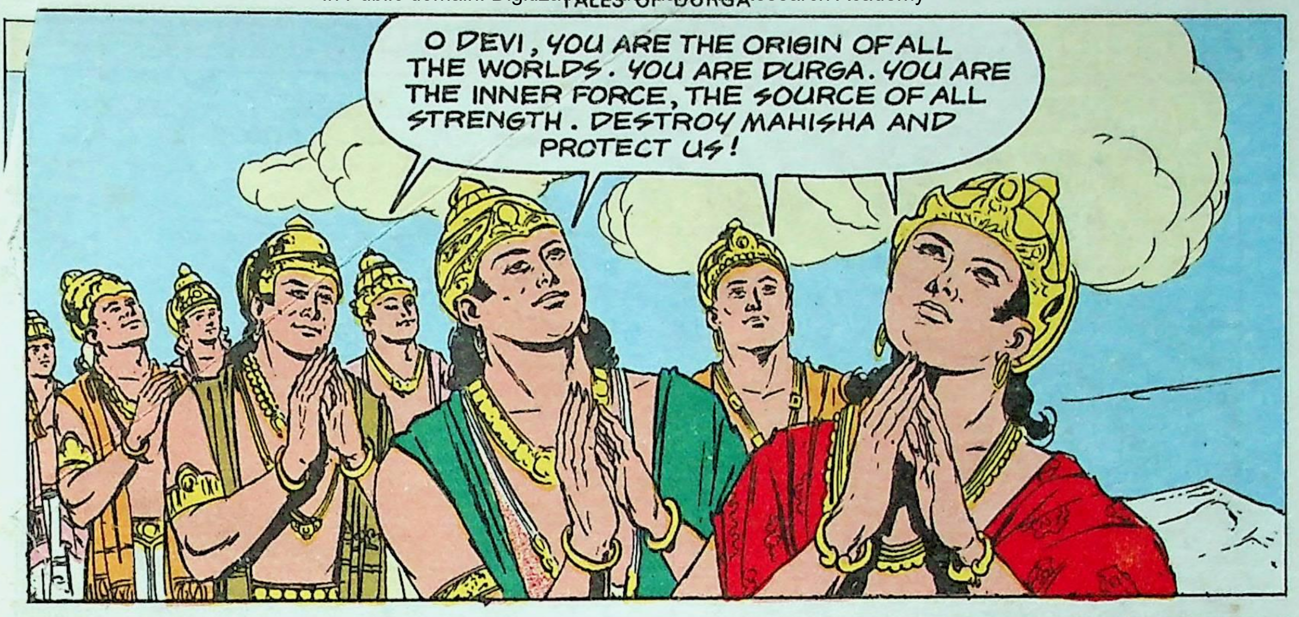

O GOD OF GODS! WHEN WILL YOU SAVE US FROM THIS PLIGHT?

* A FORM IN WHICH SHIVA IS WORSHIPPED

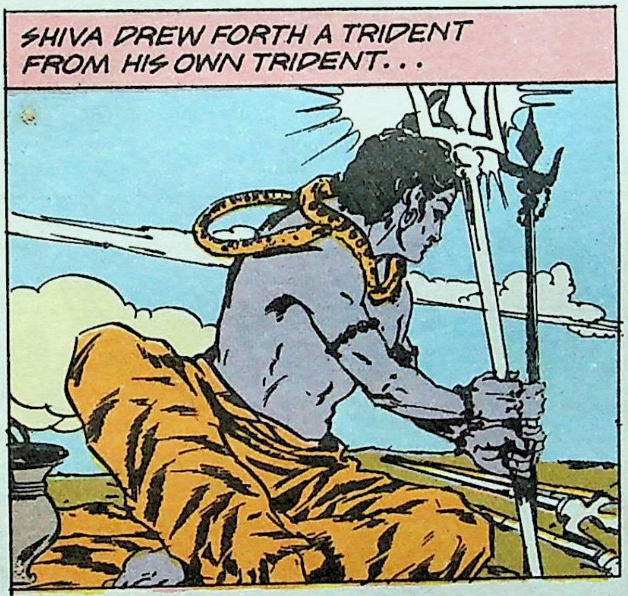

MEANWHILE, UNKNOWN TO THEM, THE DEVAS HAD ALREADY ASSEMBLED AT KAILAS, THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA.
WE ARE HELPLESS AGAINST MAHISHA. WILL EVIL TRIUMPH OVER RIGHTEOUSNESS?


EVEN AS THE DEVAS SPOKE, AN INTENSE LIGHT ISSUED FORTH FROM THE ENRAGED FACES OF SHIVA, VISHNU AND BRAHMA.

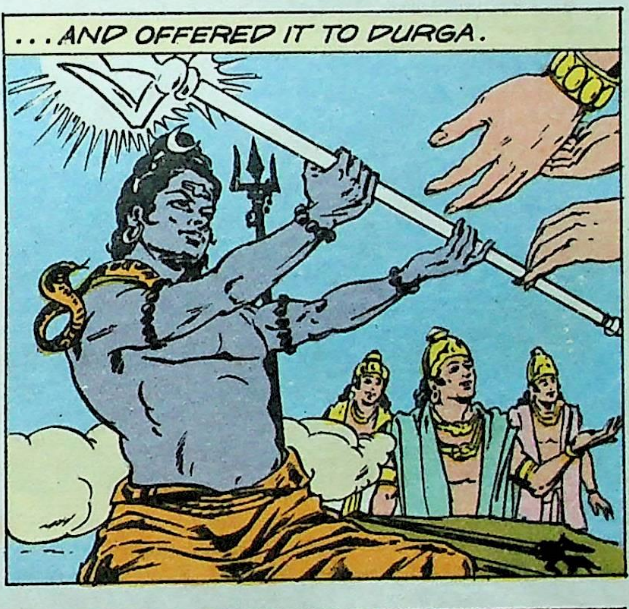

IT WAS JOINED BY SIMILAR RAYS OF LIGHT FROM INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS. AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, OUT OF THAT LIGHT A FEMALE FORM WITH A THOUSAND ARMS CAME INTO BEING! IT WAS DEVI DURGA.


O DEVI, YOU ARE THE ORIGIN OF ALL THE WORLDS. YOU ARE DURGA. YOU ARE THE INNER FORCE, THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH. DESTROY MAHISHA AND PROTECT US!

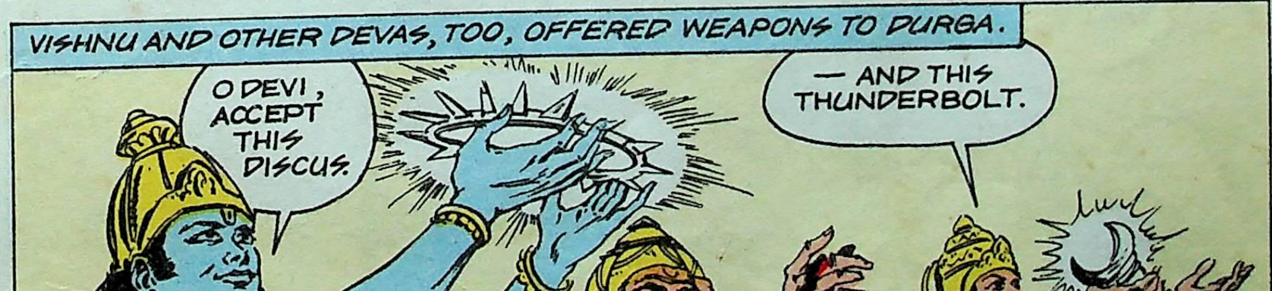
SHIVA DREW FORTH A TRIDENT FROM HIS OWN TRIDENT...

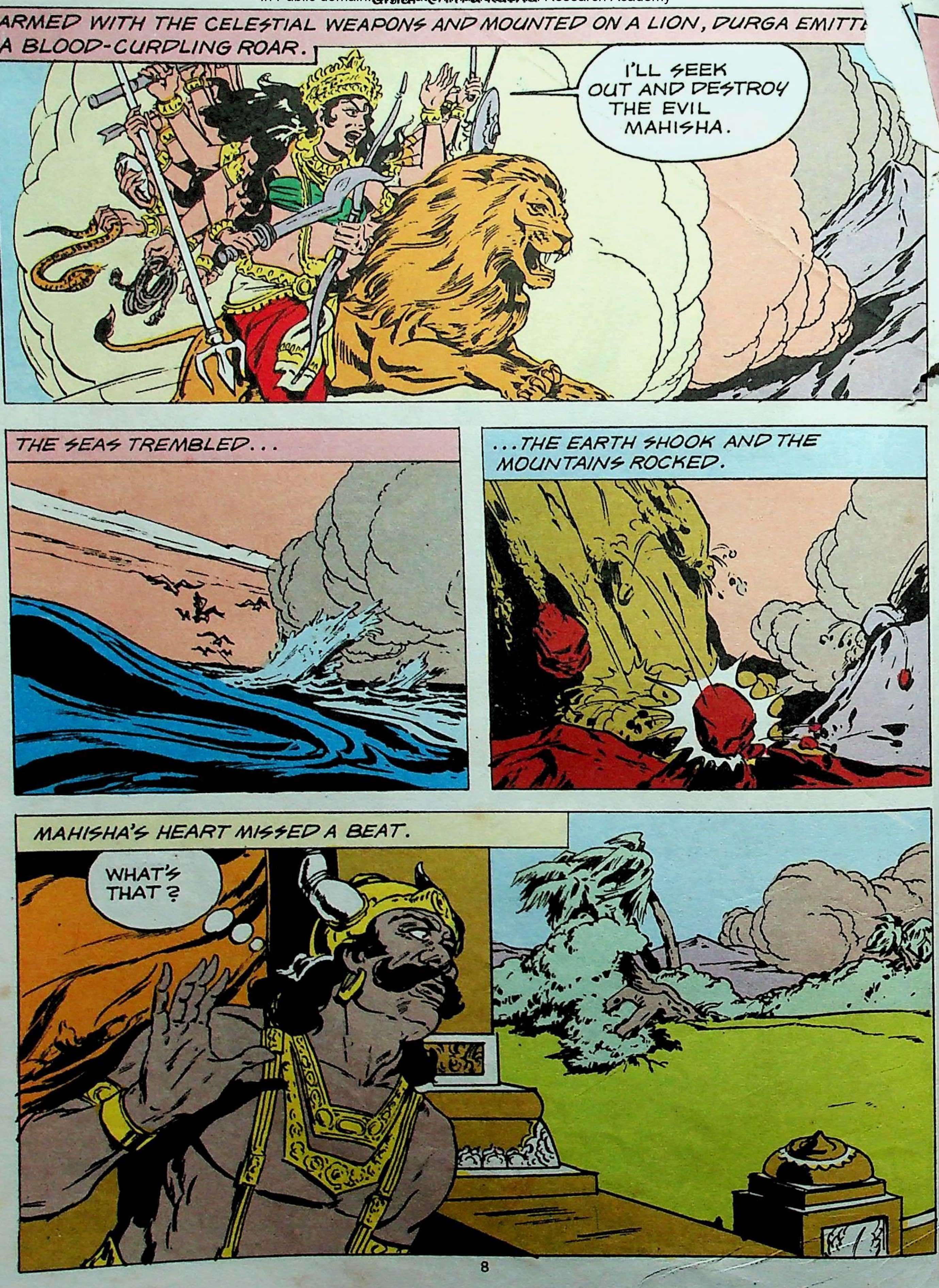


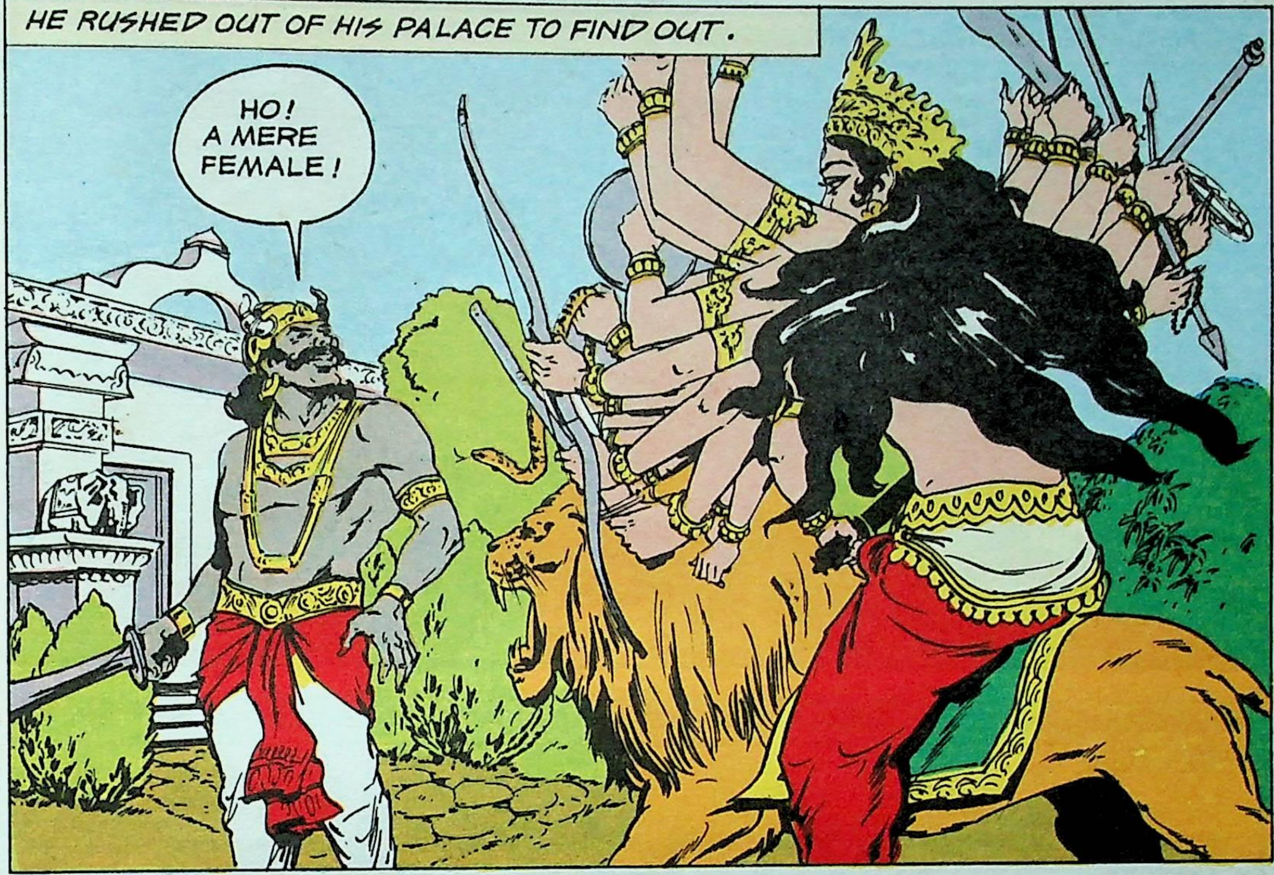
...AND OFFERED IT TO DURGA.



VISHNU AND OTHER DEVAS, TOO, OFFERED WEAPONS TO DURGA.

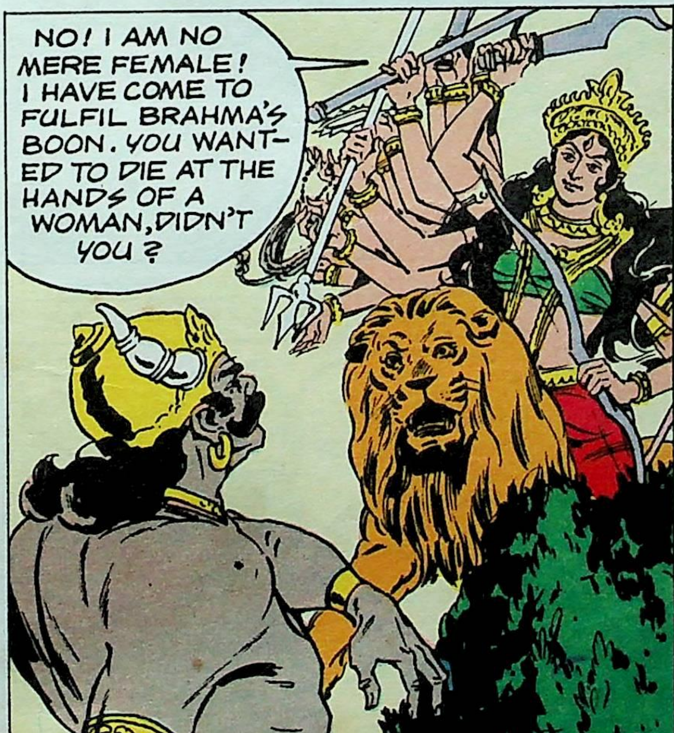

O DEVI, ACCEPT THIS DISCUS.
— AND THIS THUNDERBOLT.


ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND MOUNTED ON A LION, DURGA EMITTE
A BLOOD-CURDLING ROAR.
I'LL SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THE EVIL MAHISHA.
THE SEAS TREMBLED...
...THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE MOUNTAINS ROCKED.
MAHISHA'S HEART MISSED A BEAT.
WHAT'S THAT ?

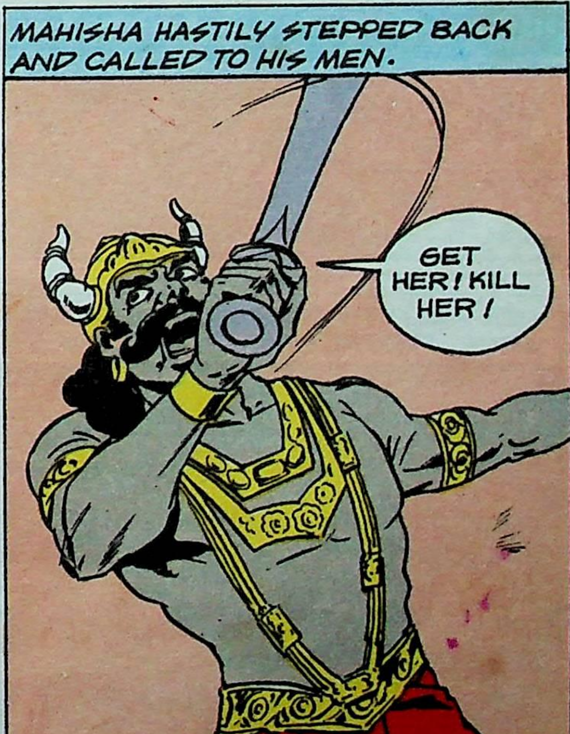


HE RUSHED OUT OF HIS PALACE TO FIND OUT.

HO! A MERE FEMALE!



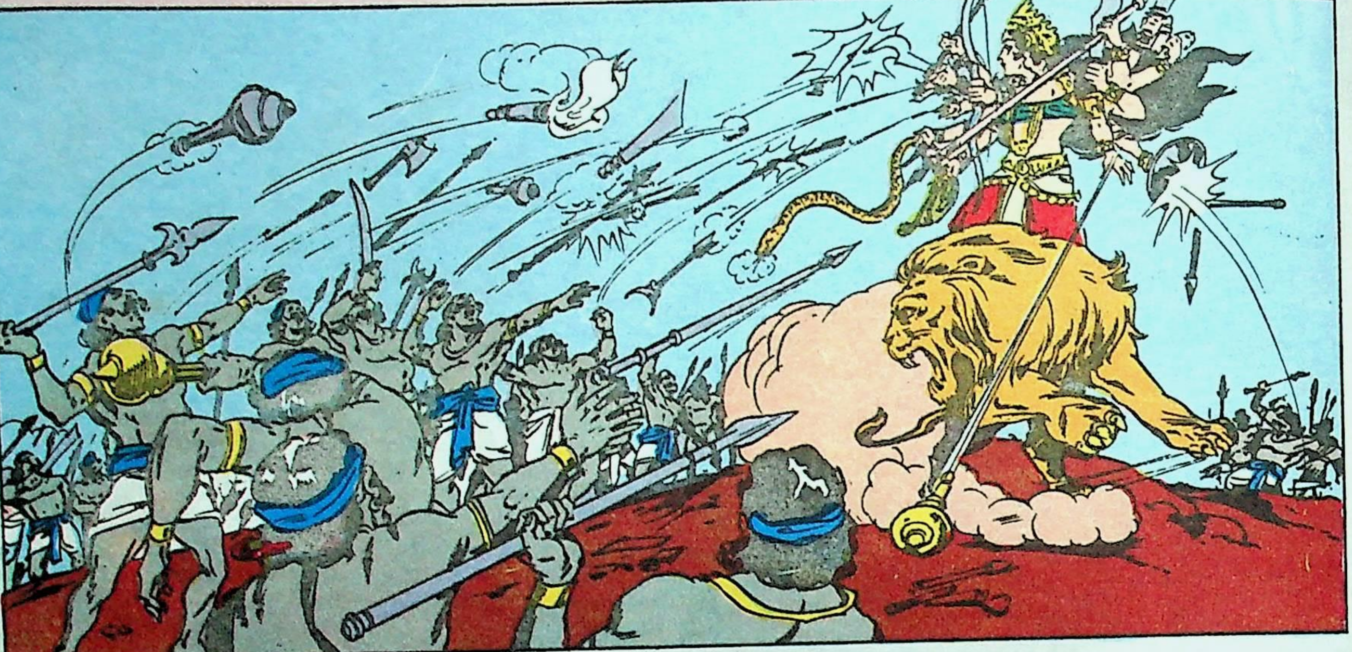
NO! I AM NO MERE FEMALE! I HAVE COME TO FULFIL BRAHMA'S BOON. YOU WANTED TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF A WOMAN, DIDN'T YOU?



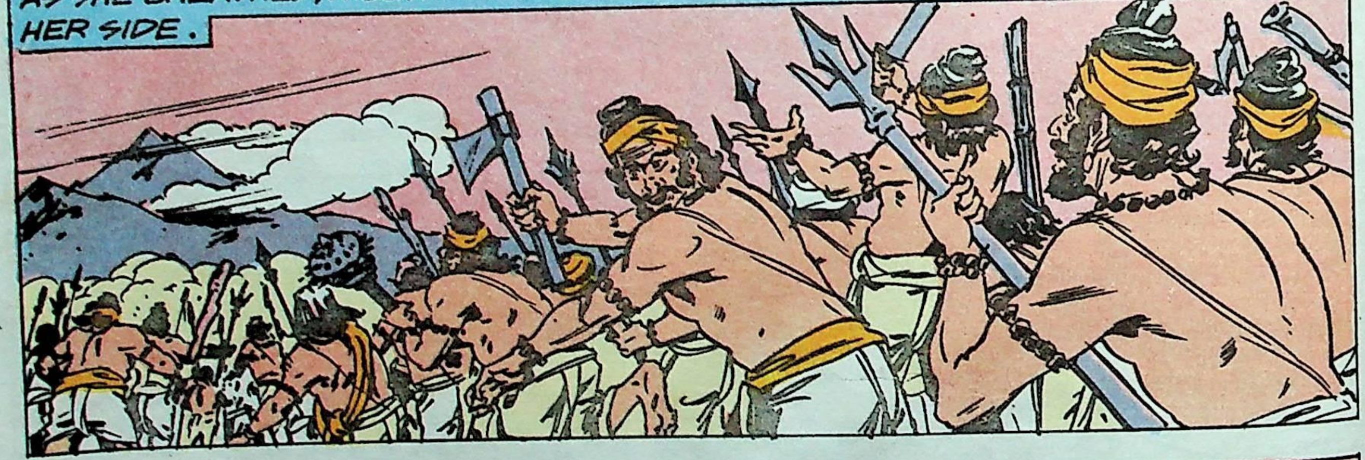
MAHISHA HASTILY STEPPED BACK AND CALLED TO HIS MEN.

GET HER! KILL HER!

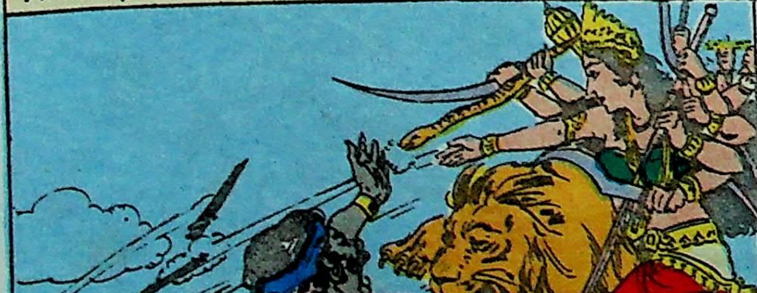
AS THE ASURAS HURLED VARIOUS WEAPONS AT HER, DURGA BREATHED HARD.



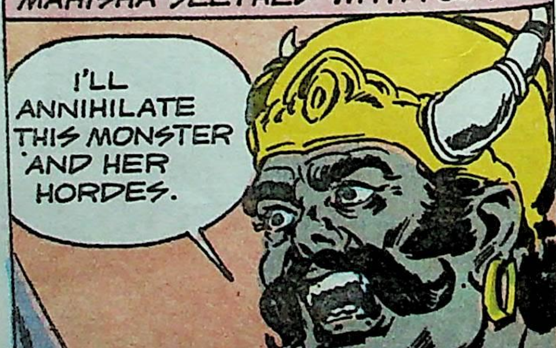
AS SHE BREATHED, THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS CAME INTO BEING AND FOUGHT AT HER SIDE.



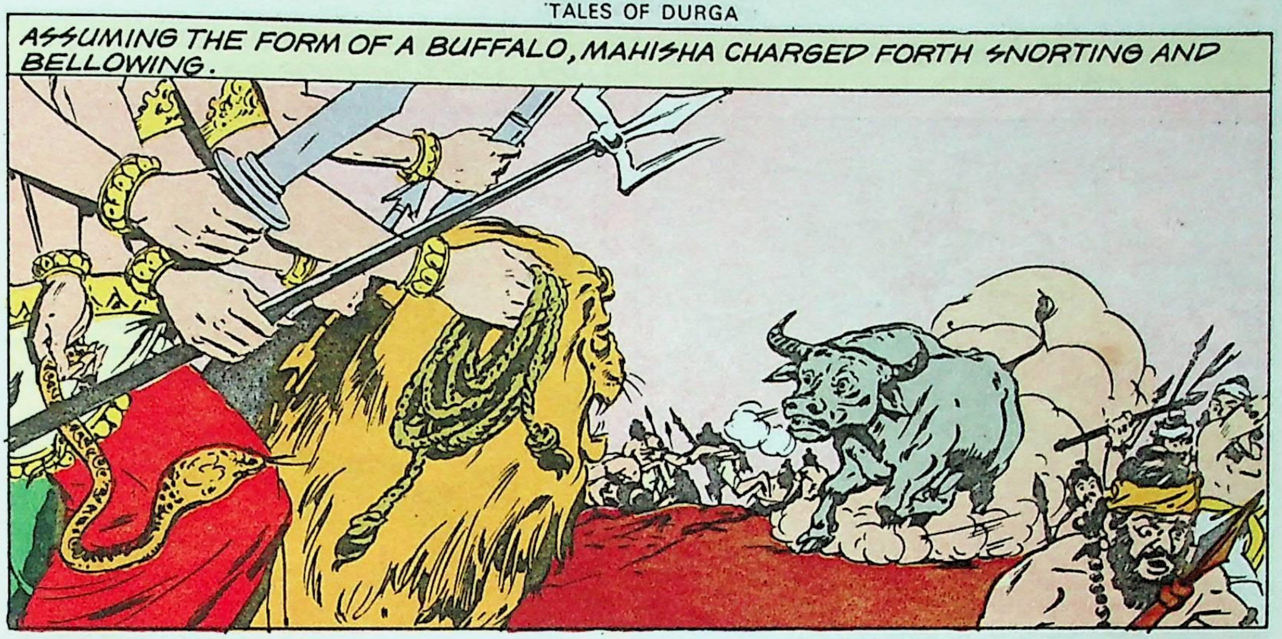
HER MOUNT STRODE THROUGH MAHISHA'S ARMY, DESTROYING THOUSANDS OF ASURAS.



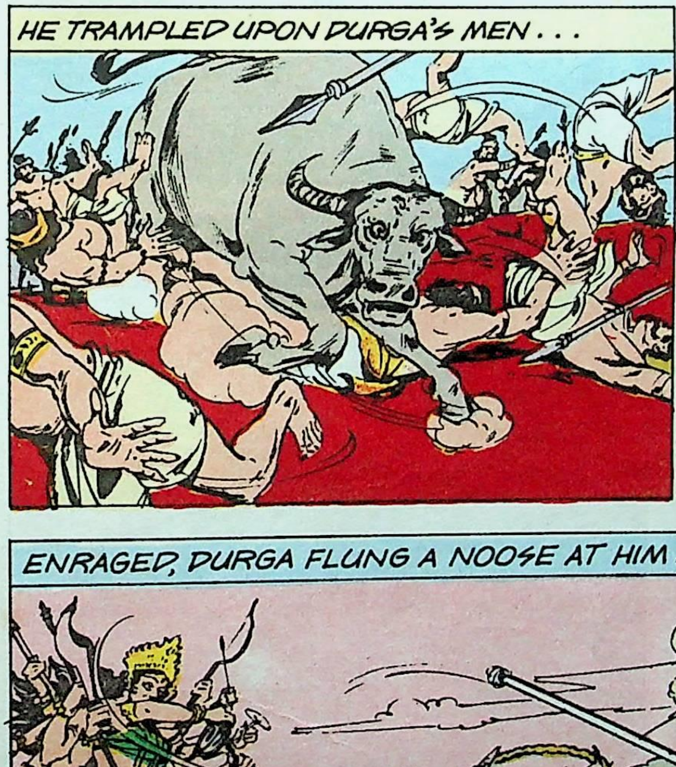
MAHISHA SEETHED WITH FURY.


I'LL ANNIHILATE THIS MONSTER AND HER HORDES.

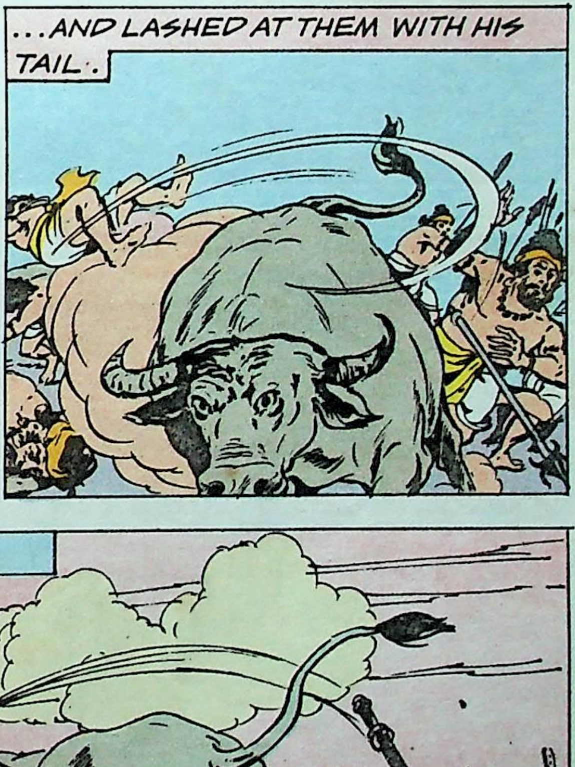
ASSUMING THE FORM OF A BUFFALO, MAHISHA CHARGED FORTH SNORTING AND BELLOWING.



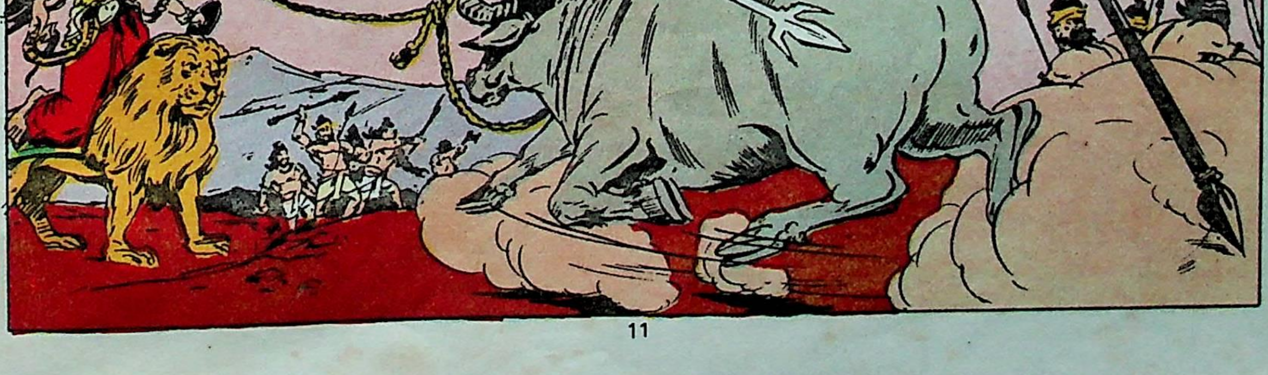
HE TRAMPLED UPON DURGA'S MEN . . .



. . . AND LASHED AT THEM WITH HIS TAIL .



ENRAGED, DURGA FLUNG A NOOSE AT HIM .



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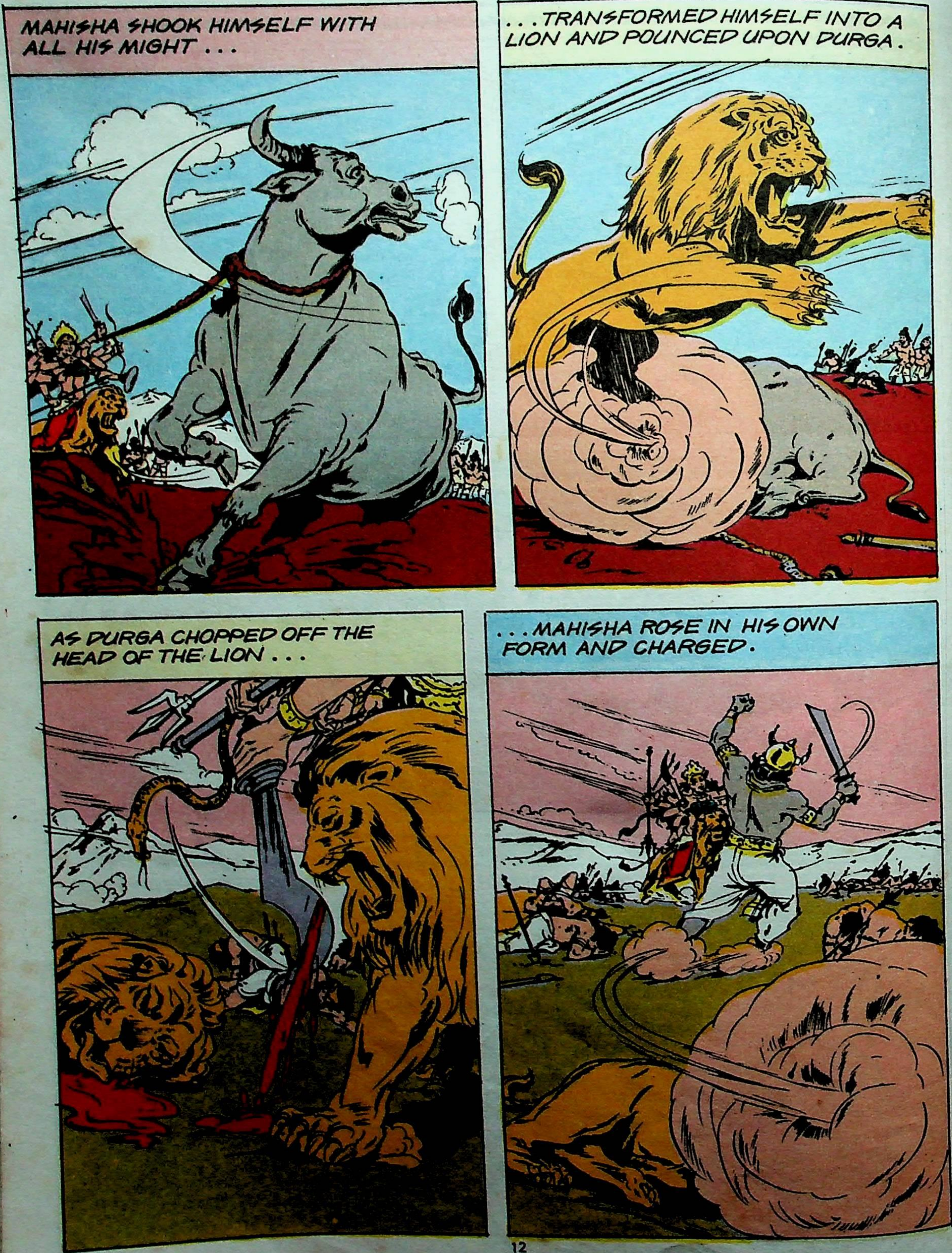
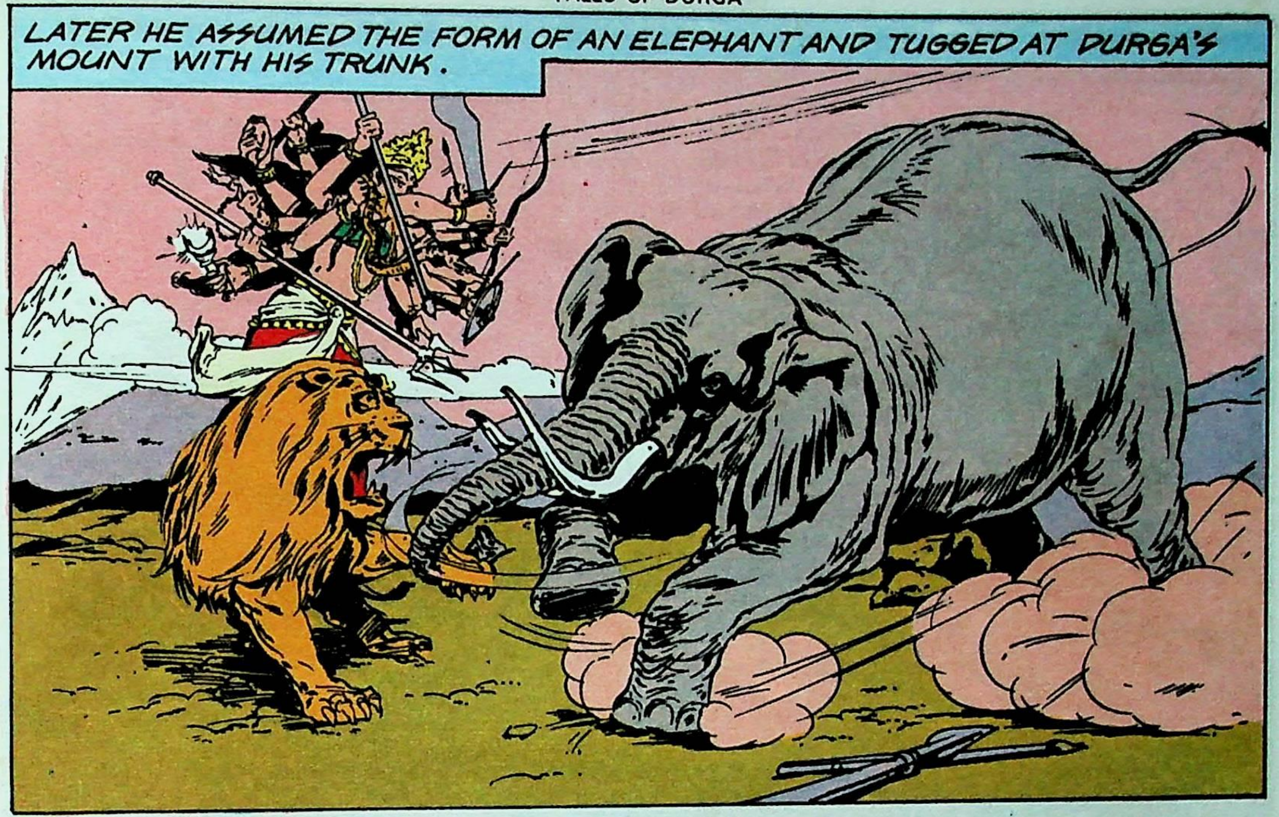
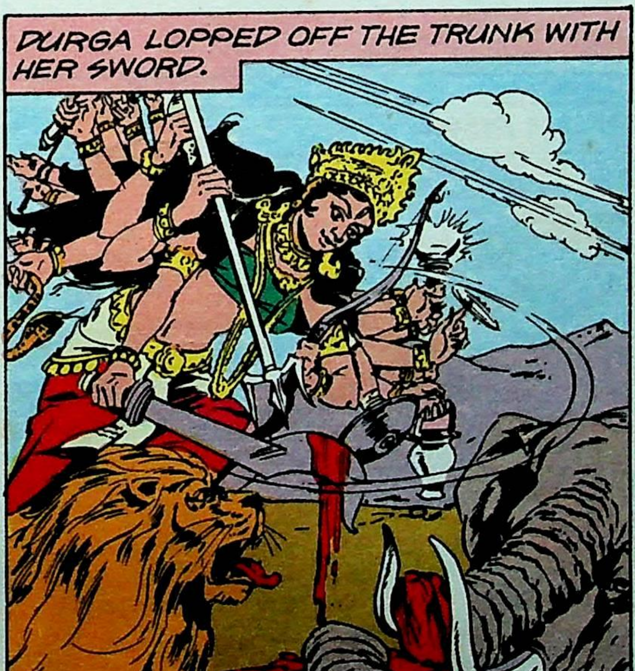


MAHISHA SHOOK HIMSELF WITH ALL HIS MIGHT . . .
. . . TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO A LION AND POUNCED UPON DURGA .
AS DURGA CHOPPED OFF THE HEAD OF THE LION . . .
. . . MAHISHA ROSE IN HIS OWN FORM AND CHARGED .

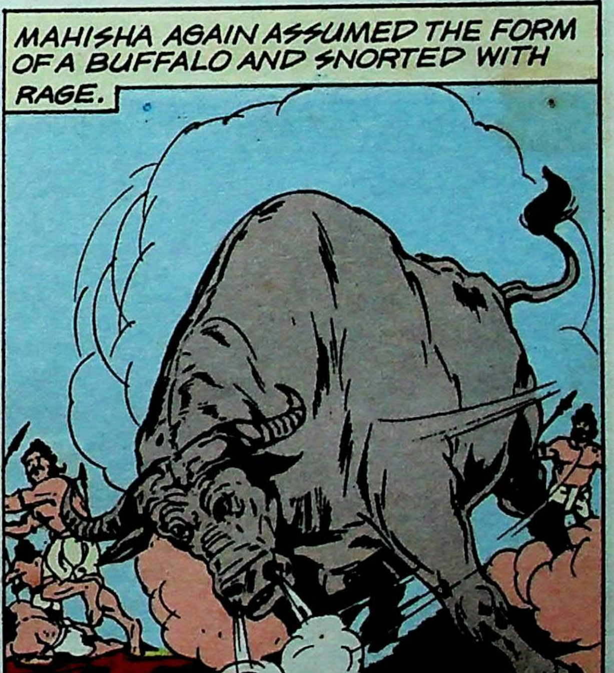
LATER HE ASSUMED THE FORM OF AN ELEPHANT AND TUGGED AT DURGA'S MOUNT WITH HIS TRUNK.

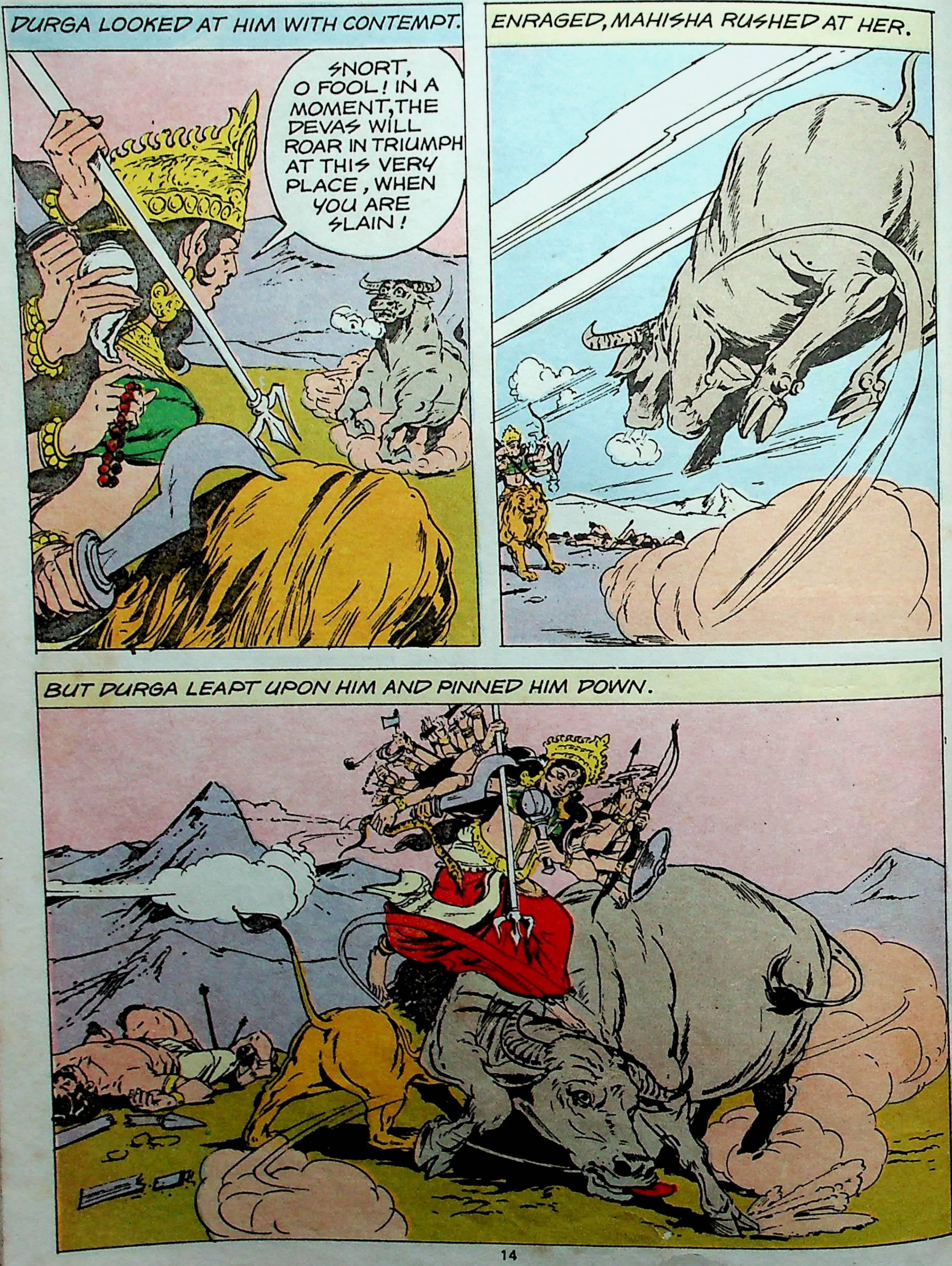


DURGA LOPPED OFF THE TRUNK WITH HER SWORD.

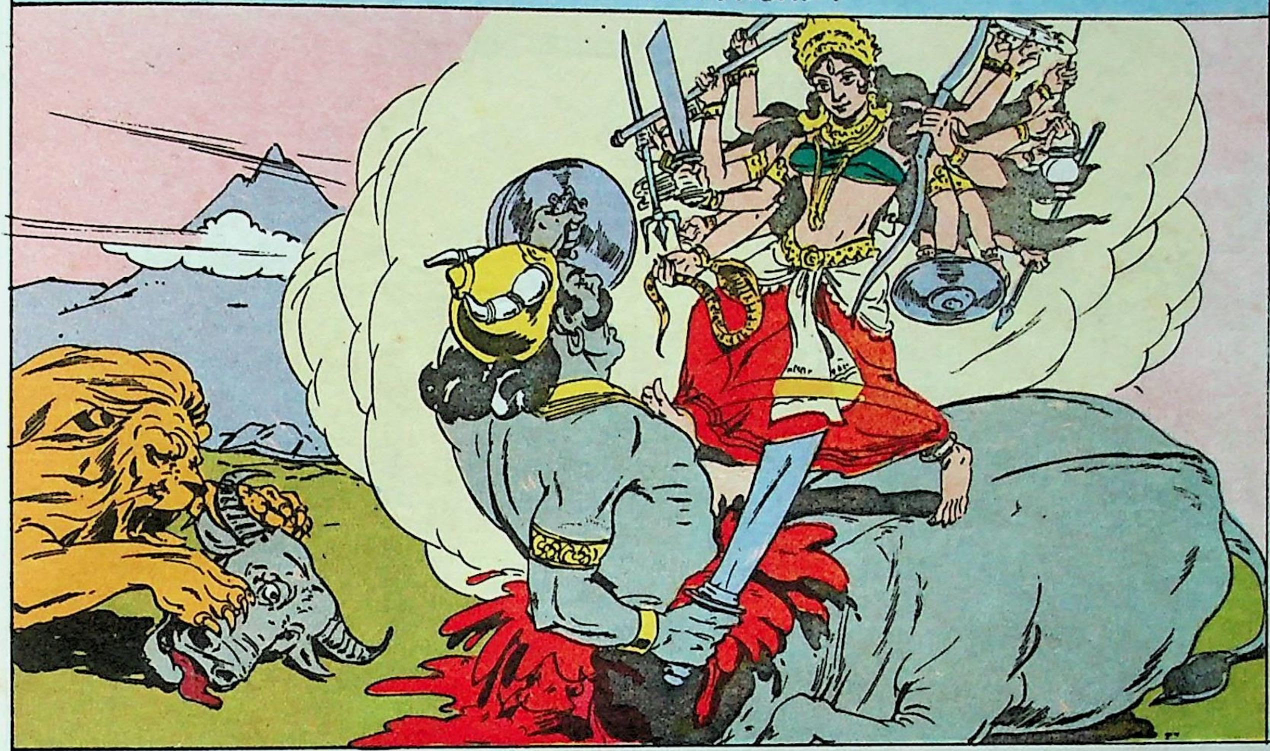


MAHISHA AGAIN ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BUFFALO AND SNORTED WITH RAGE.

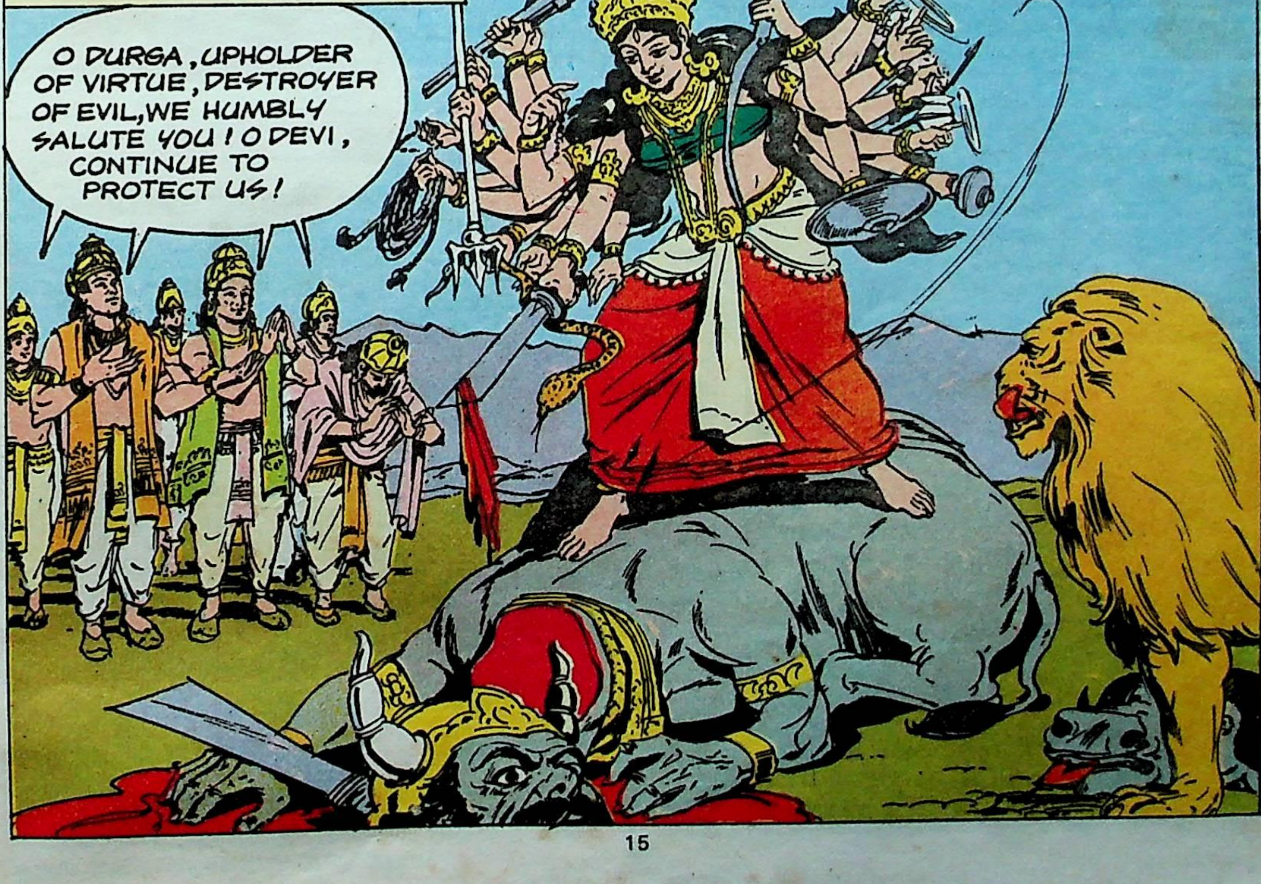



DURGA LOOKED AT HIM WITH CONTEMPT.
SNORT, O FOOL! IN A MOMENT, THE DEVAS WILL ROAR IN TRIUMPH AT THIS VERY PLACE, WHEN YOU ARE SLAIN!
ENRAGED, MAHISHA RUSHED AT HER.
BUT DURGA LEAPT UPON HIM AND PINNED HIM DOWN.

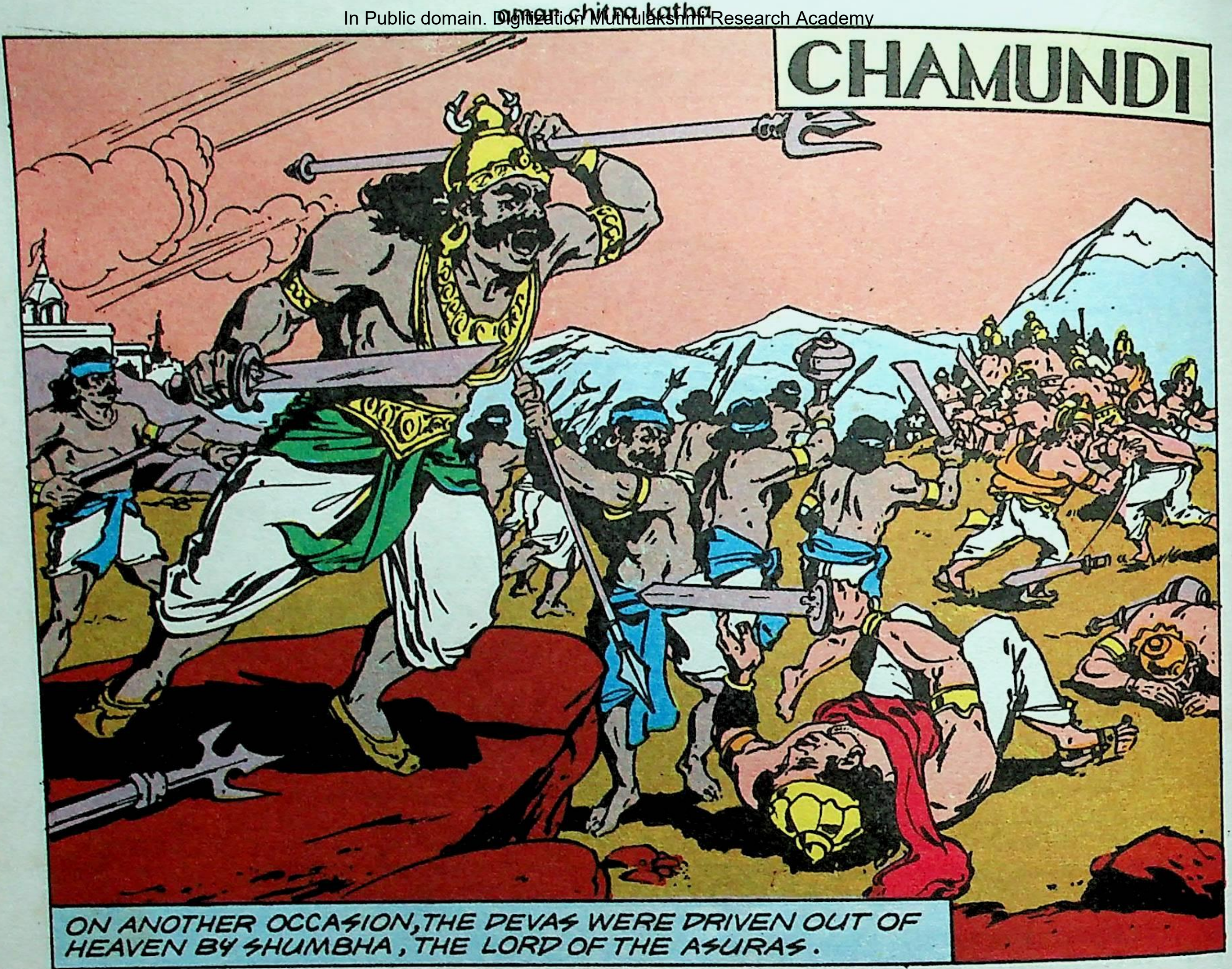
MAHISHA STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF. AS HALF OF HIM EMERGED FROM THE MOUTH OF THE BUFFALO, DURGA RAISED HER SWORD.



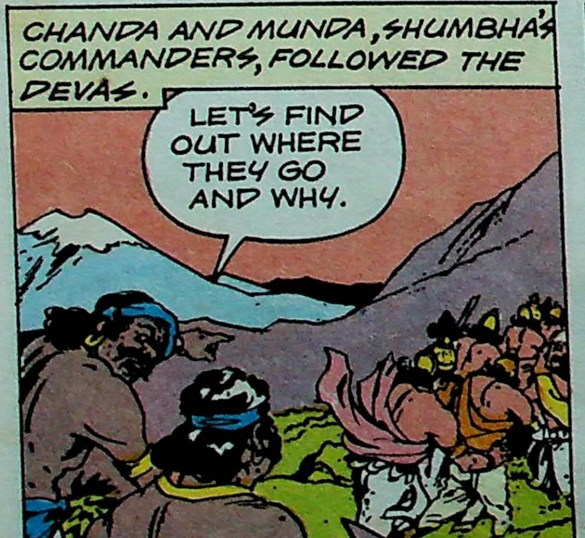
THE NEXT MOMENT, MAHISHA FELL DEAD, AT THE FOOT OF DURGA. THE DEVAS WERE OVERJOYED.


O DURGA, UPHOLDER OF VIRTUE, DESTROYER OF EVIL, WE HUMBLY SALUTE YOU ! O DEVI, CONTINUE TO PROTECT US !

CHAMUNDI

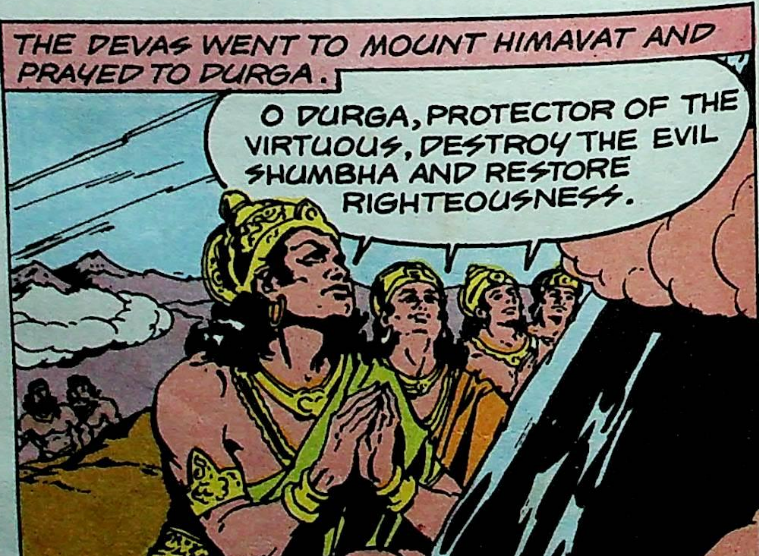


ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THE DEVAS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN BY SHUMBHA, THE LORD OF THE ASURAS.



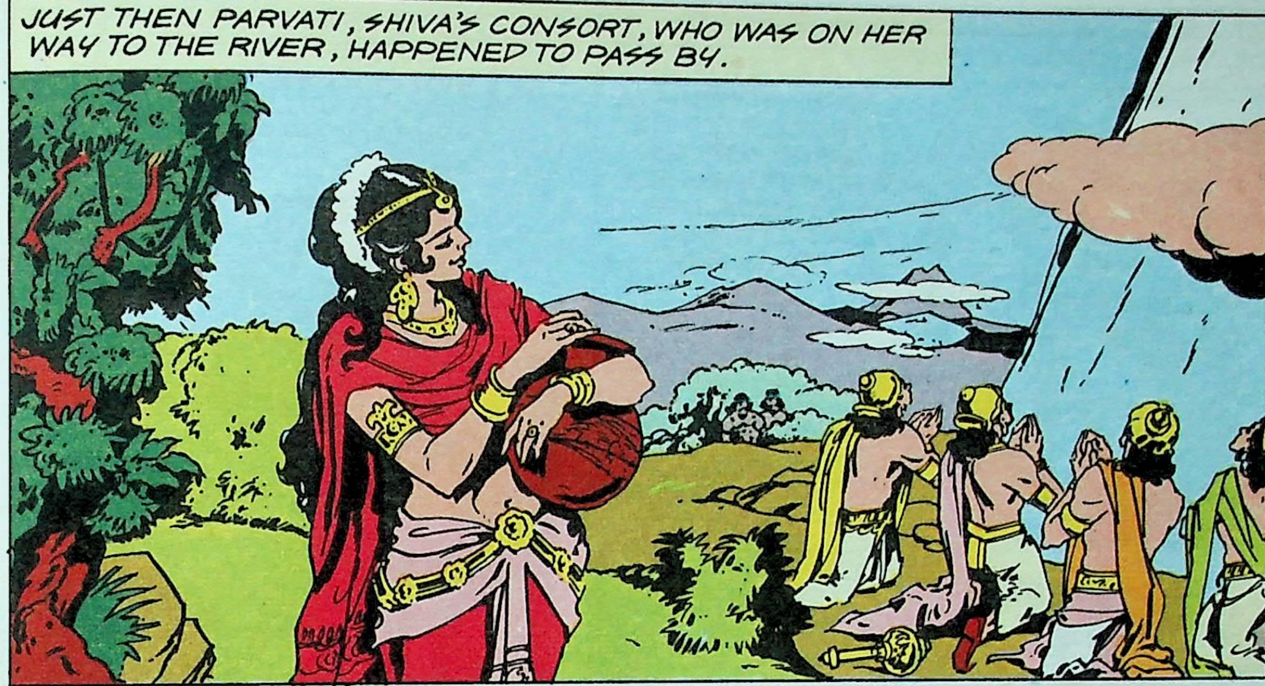
CHANDA AND MUNDA, SHUMBHA'S COMMANDERS, FOLLOWED THE DEVAS.

LET'S FIND OUT WHERE THEY GO AND WHY.

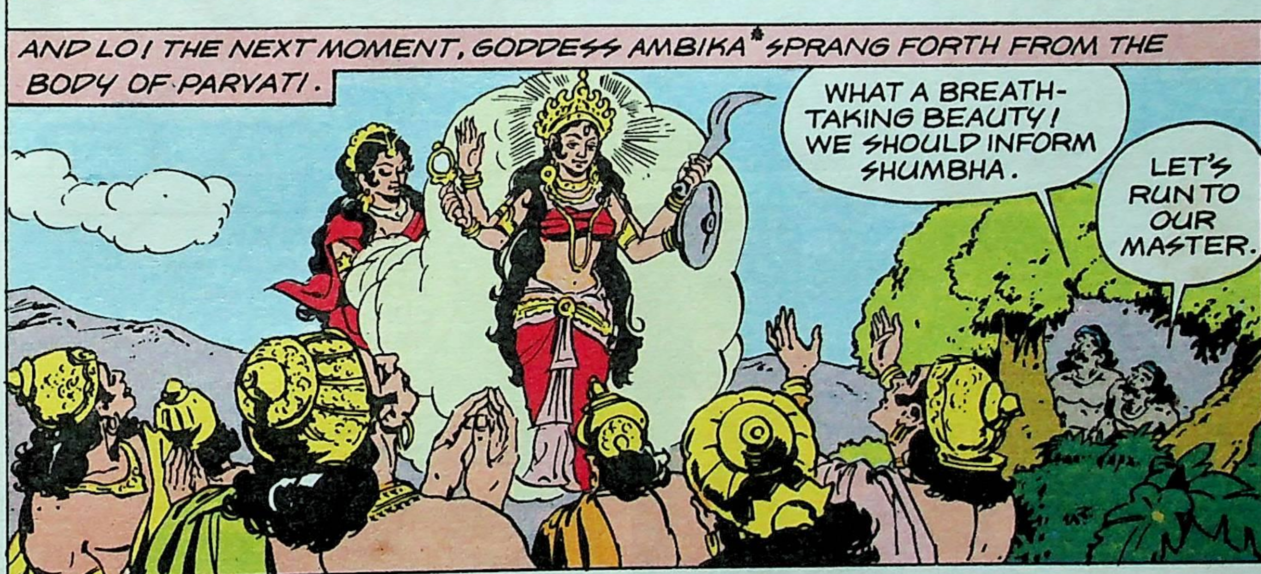


THE DEVAS WENT TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND PRAYED TO DURGA.

O DURGA, PROTECTOR OF THE VIRTUOUS, DESTROY THE EVIL SHUMBHA AND RESTORE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

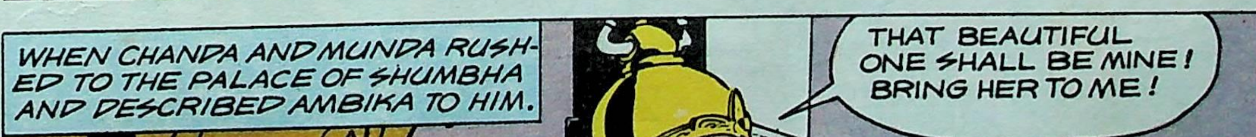


JUST THEN PARVATI, SHIVA'S CONSORT, WHO WAS ON HER WAY TO THE RIVER, HAPPENED TO PASS BY.



AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, GODDESS AMBIKA* SPRANG FORTH FROM THE BODY OF PARVATI.

WHAT A BREATH-TAKING BEAUTY! WE SHOULD INFORM SHUMBHA.
LET'S RUN TO OUR MASTER.

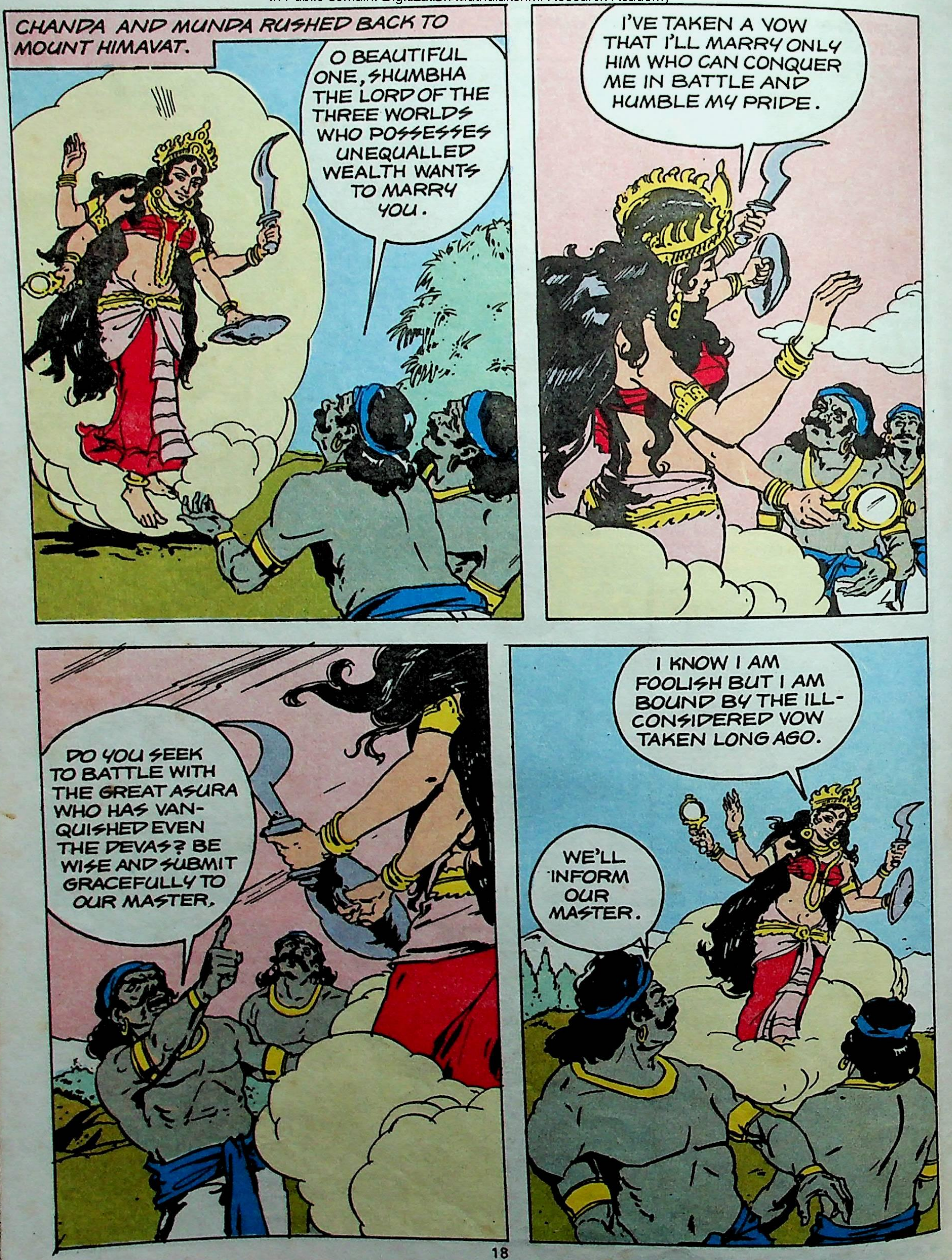


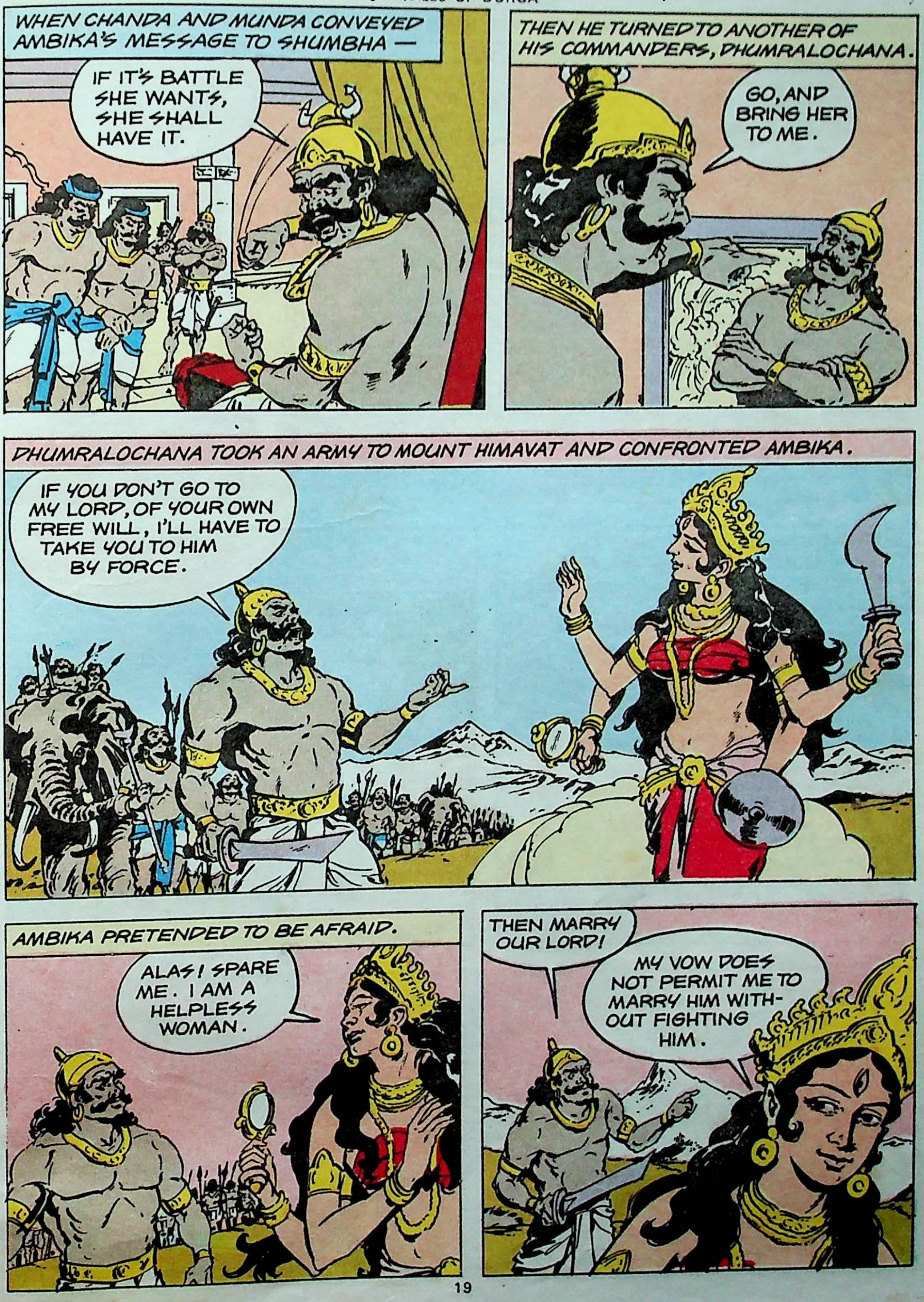
WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED TO THE PALACE OF SHUMBHA AND DESCRIBED AMBIKA TO HIM.

THAT BEAUTIFUL ONE SHALL BE MINE! BRING HER TO ME!

---

* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA


CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED BACK TO MOUNT HIMAVAT.
O BEAUTIFUL ONE, SHUMBHA THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS WHO POSSESSES UNEQUALLED WEALTH WANTS TO MARRY YOU.
I'VE TAKEN A VOW THAT I'LL MARRY ONLY HIM WHO CAN CONQUER ME IN BATTLE AND HUMBLE MY PRIDE.
DO YOU SEEK TO BATTLE WITH THE GREAT ASURA WHO HAS VANQUISHED EVEN THE DEVAS? BE WISE AND SUBMIT GRACEFULLY TO OUR MASTER.
I KNOW I AM FOOLISH BUT I AM BOUND BY THE ILL-CONSIDERED VOW TAKEN LONG AGO.
WE'LL INFORM OUR MASTER.


WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA CONVEYED AMBIKA'S MESSAGE TO SHUMBHA —
IF IT'S BATTLE SHE WANTS, SHE SHALL HAVE IT.
THEN HE TURNED TO ANOTHER OF HIS COMMANDERS, DHUMRALOCHANA.
GO, AND BRING HER TO ME.
DHUMRALOCHANA TOOK AN ARMY TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND CONFRONTED AMBIKA.
IF YOU DON'T GO TO MY LORD, OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU TO HIM BY FORCE.
AMBIKA PRETENDED TO BE AFRAID.
ALAS! SPARE ME. I AM A HELPLESS WOMAN.
THEN MARRY OUR LORD!
MY VOW DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO MARRY HIM WITHOUT FIGHTING HIM.

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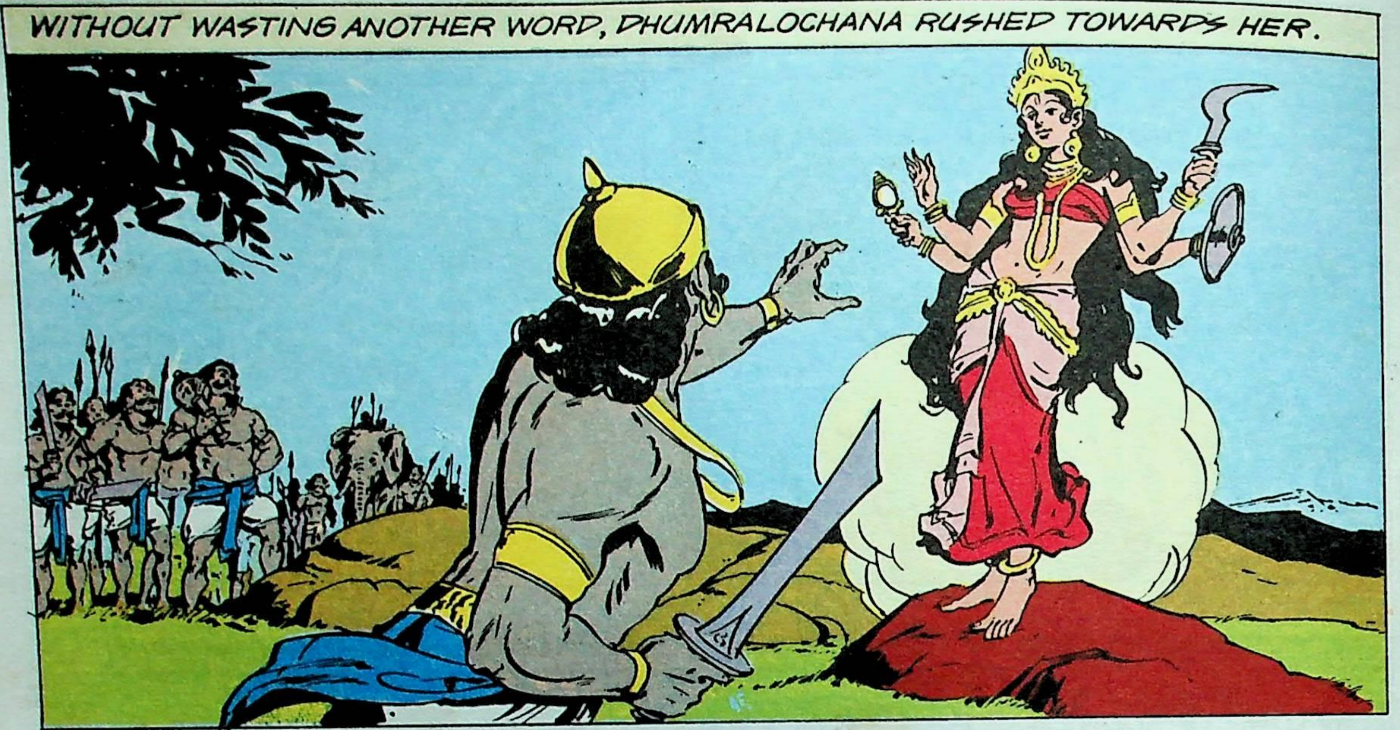
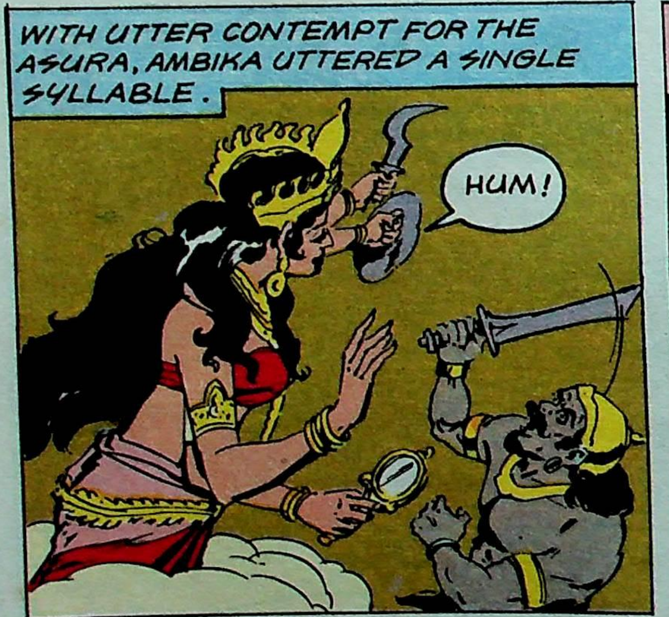
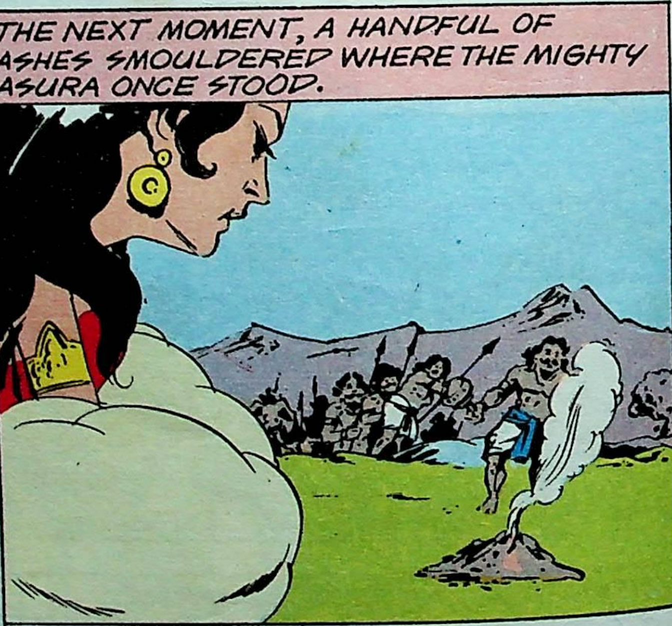


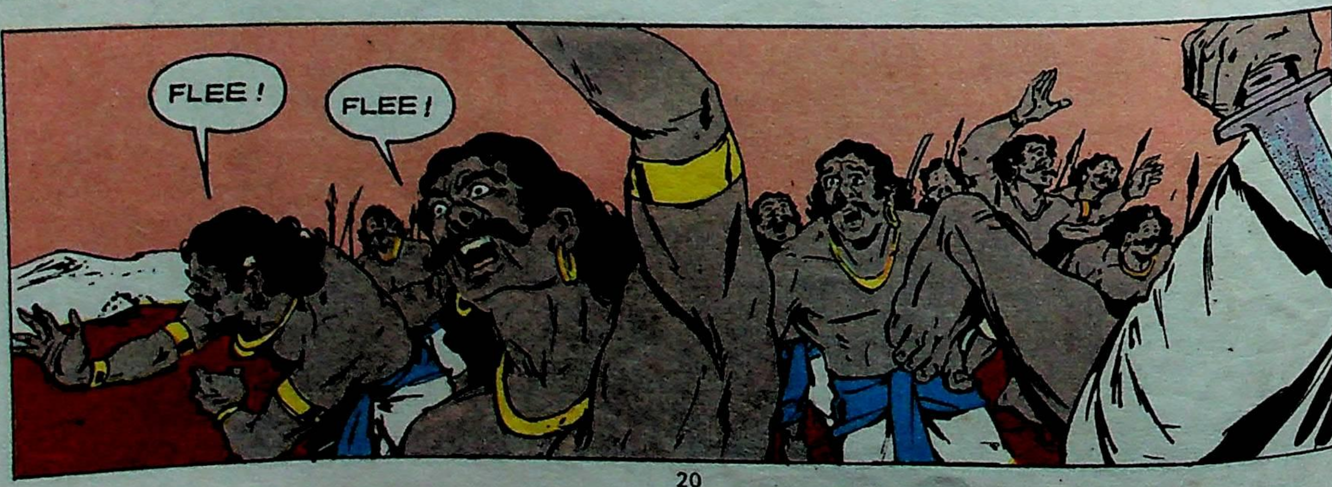
WITHOUT WASTING ANOTHER WORD, DHUMRALOCHANA RUSHED TOWARDS HER.

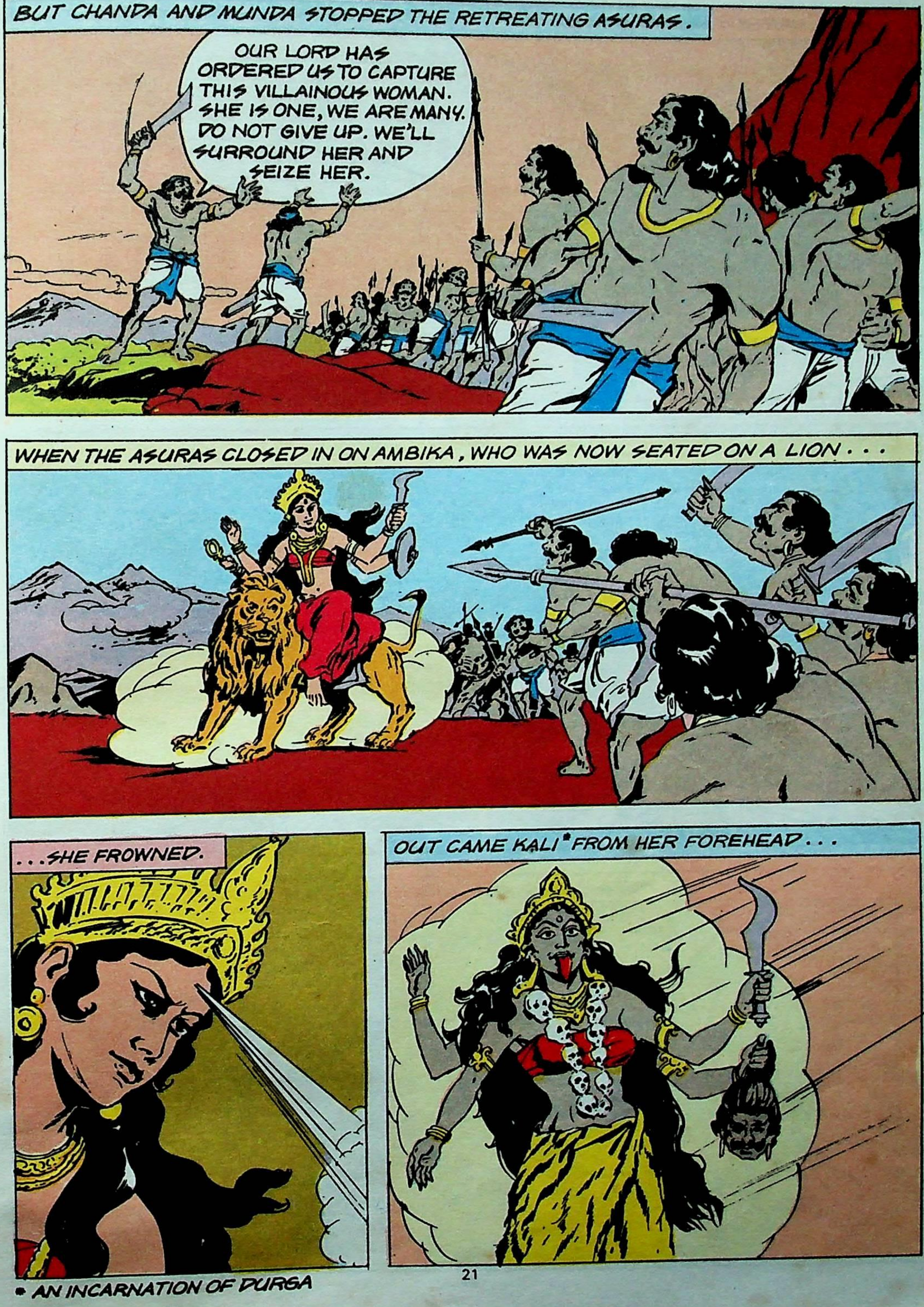


WITH UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE ASURA, AMBIKA UTTERED A SINGLE SYLLABLE.



THE NEXT MOMENT, A HANDFUL OF ASHES SMOULDERED WHERE THE MIGHTY ASURA ONCE STOOD.




BUT CHANDA AND MUNDA STOPPED THE RETREATING ASURAS.
OUR LORD HAS ORDERED US TO CAPTURE THIS VILLAINOUS WOMAN. SHE IS ONE, WE ARE MANY. DO NOT GIVE UP. WE'LL SURROUND HER AND SEIZE HER.
WHEN THE ASURAS CLOSED IN ON AMBIKA, WHO WAS NOW SEATED ON A LION . . .
. . . SHE FROWNED.
OUT CAME KALI* FROM HER FOREHEAD . . .

* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA

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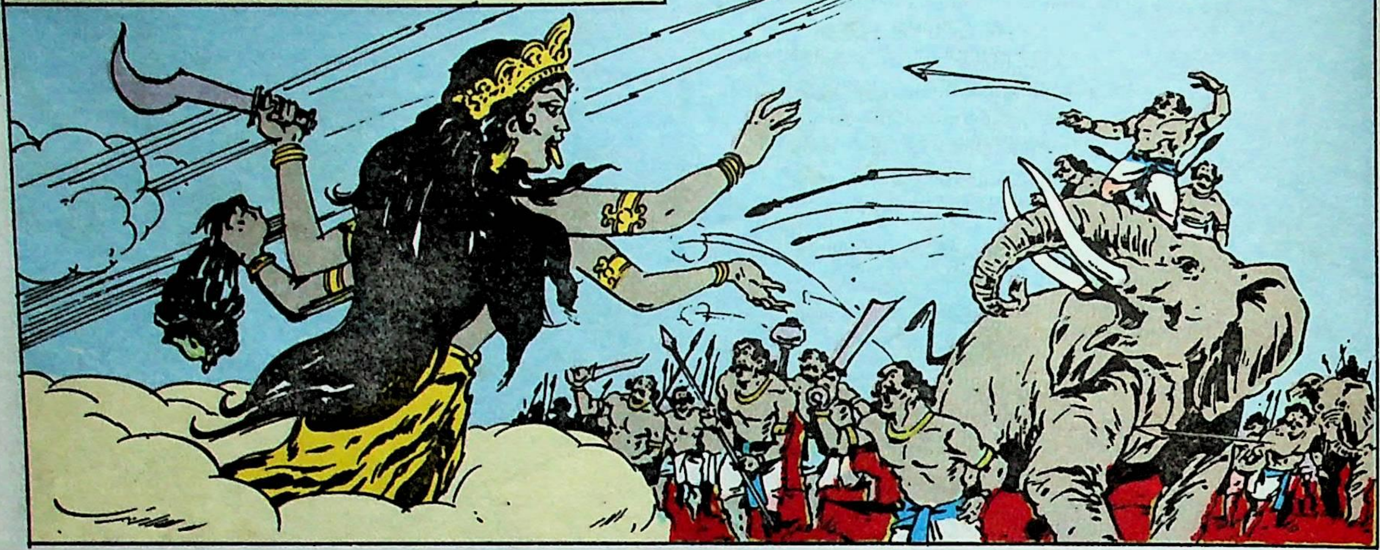
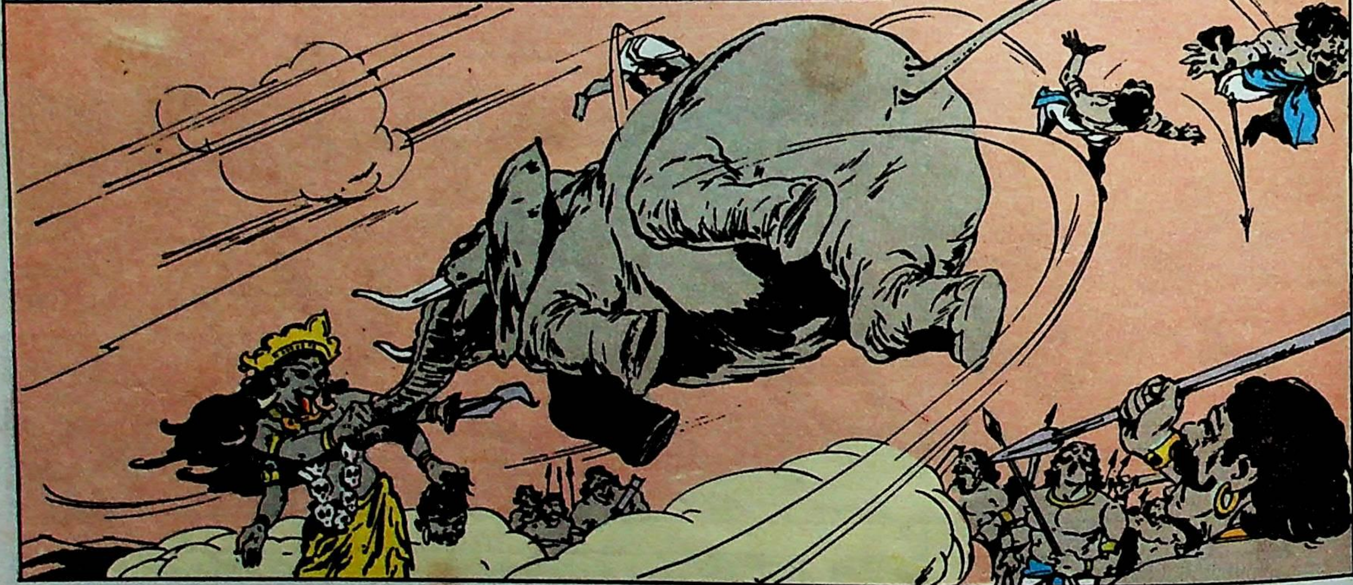
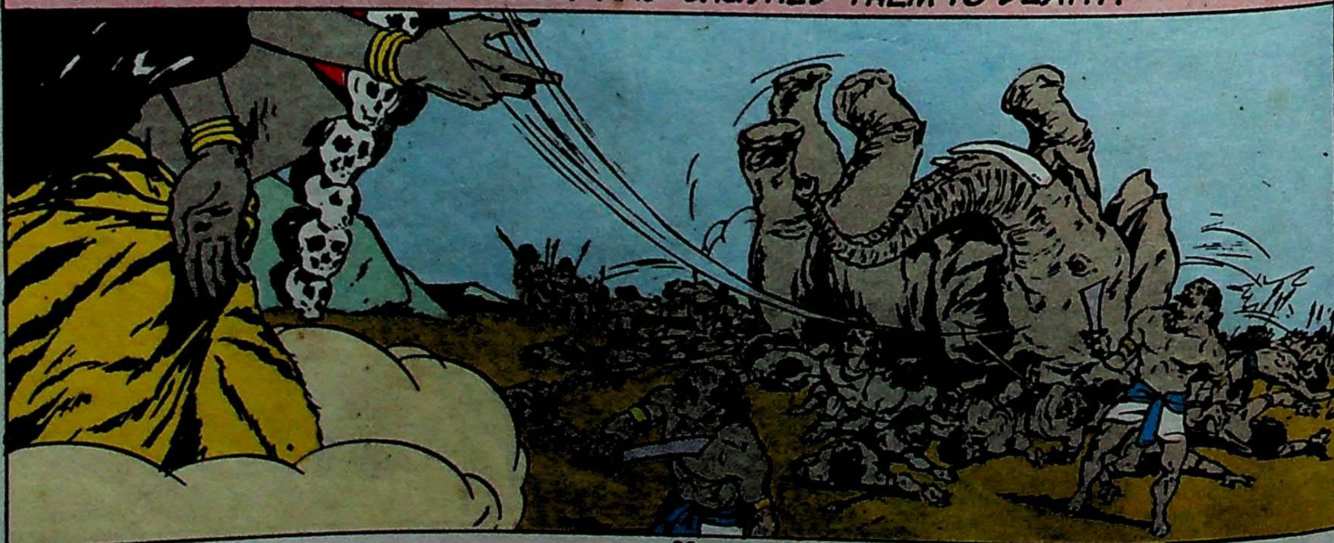
... AND CHARGED AT THE ASURAS.

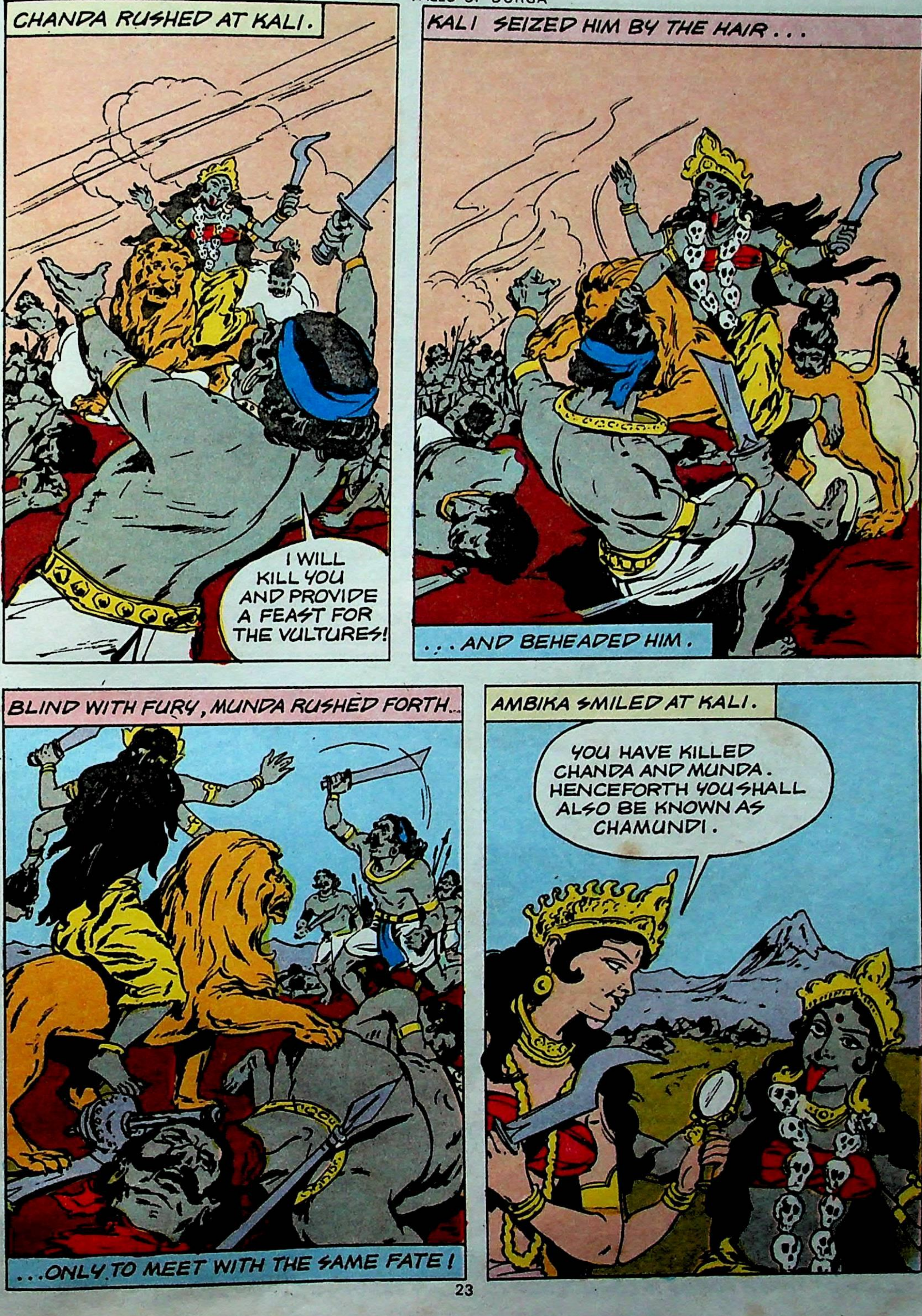


SNATCHING AN ELEPHANT WITH ONE HAND. . .

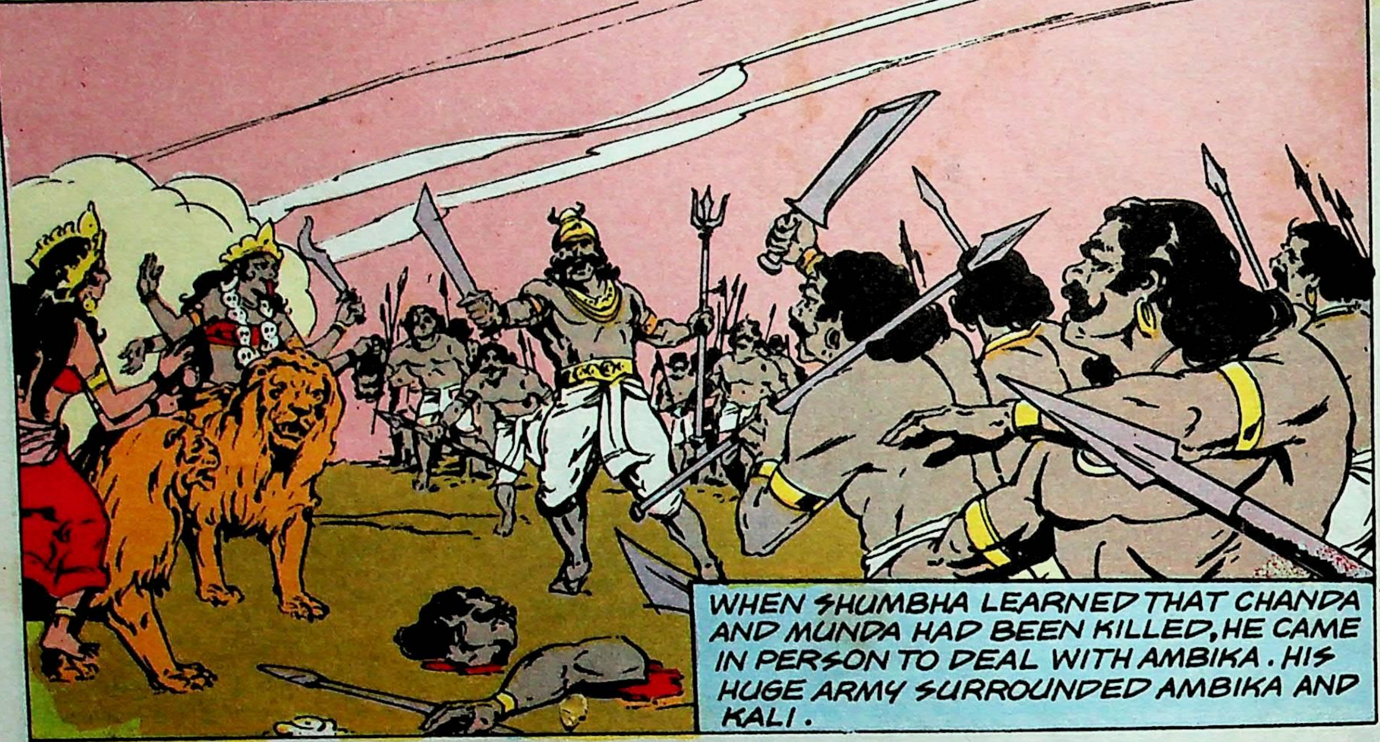


. . . SHE HURLED IT AT THE ASURAS AND CRUSHED THEM TO DEATH.



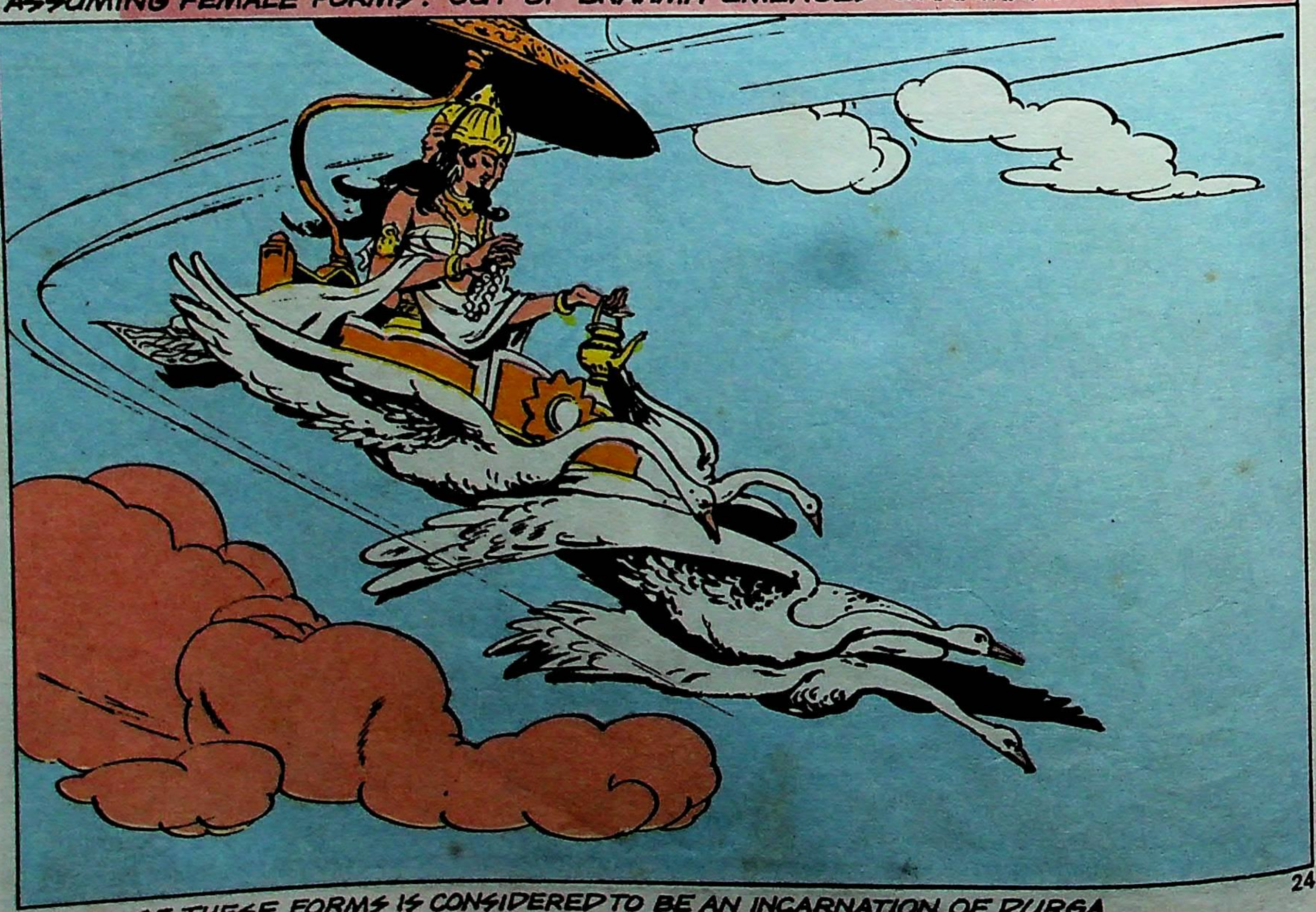

CHANDA RUSHED AT KALI.
I WILL KILL YOU AND PROVIDE A FEAST FOR THE VULTURES!
KALI SEIZED HIM BY THE HAIR . . .
. . . AND BEHEADED HIM.
BLIND WITH FURY, MUNDA RUSHED FORTH...
. . . ONLY TO MEET WITH THE SAME FATE!
AMBIKA SMILED AT KALI.
YOU HAVE KILLED CHANDA AND MUNDA. HENCEFORTH YOU SHALL ALSO BE KNOWN AS CHAMUNDI.

HOW DURGA SLEW SHUMBHA



WHEN SHUMBHA LEARNED THAT CHANDA AND MUNDA HAD BEEN KILLED, HE CAME IN PERSON TO DEAL WITH AMBIKA. HIS HUGE ARMY SURROUNDED AMBIKA AND KALI.

THEN THE SHAKTIS — THE INNER FORCE OF VARIOUS GODS — ISSUED FORTH ASSUMING FEMALE FORMS*. OUT OF BRAHMA EMERGED BRAHMANI ...



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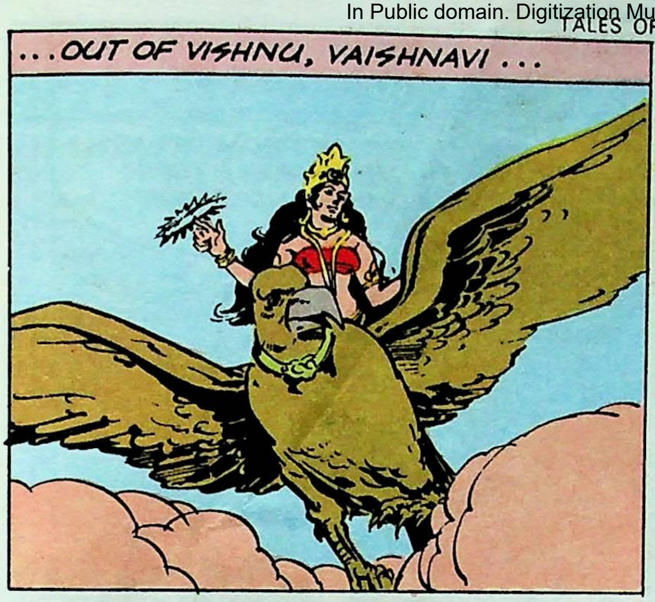
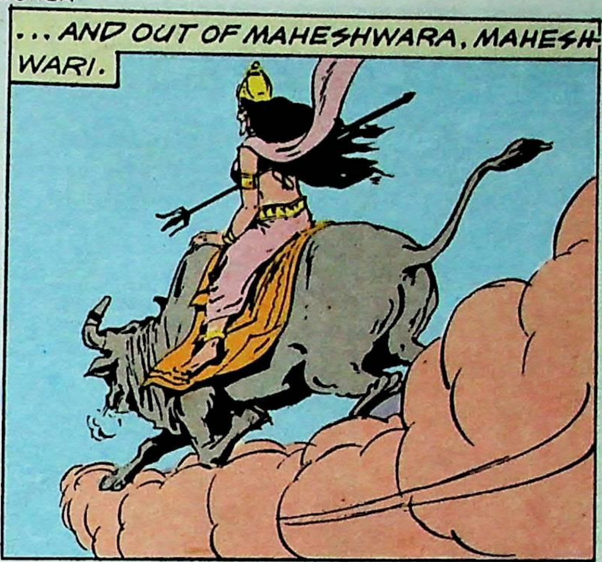
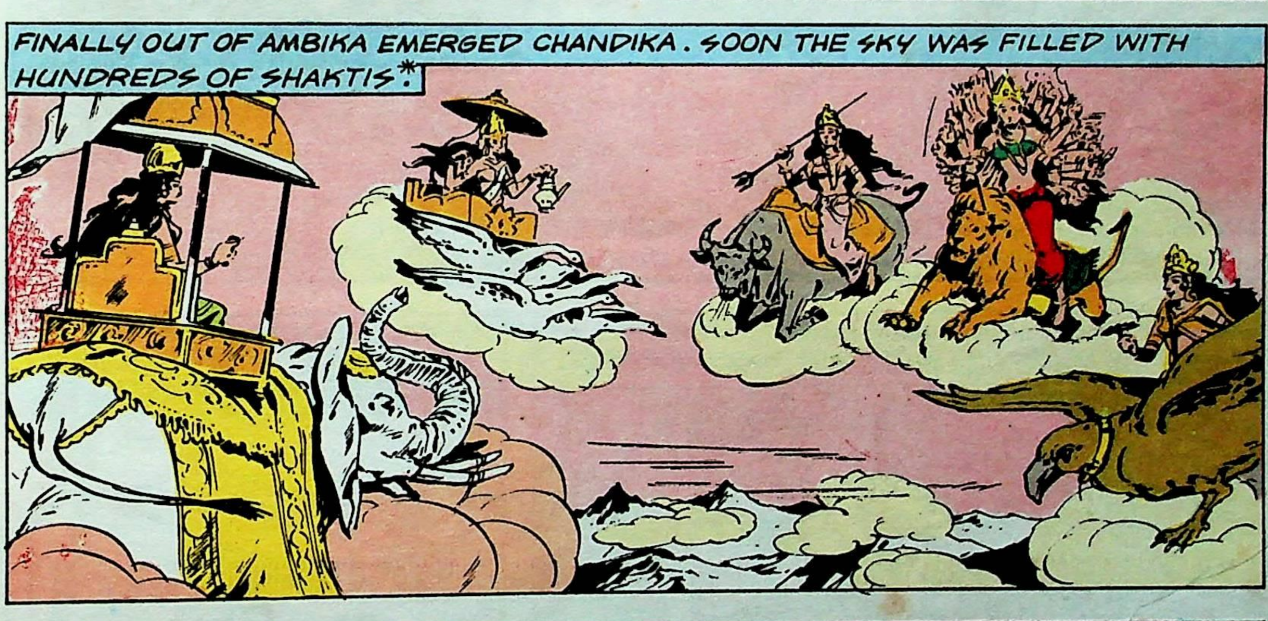
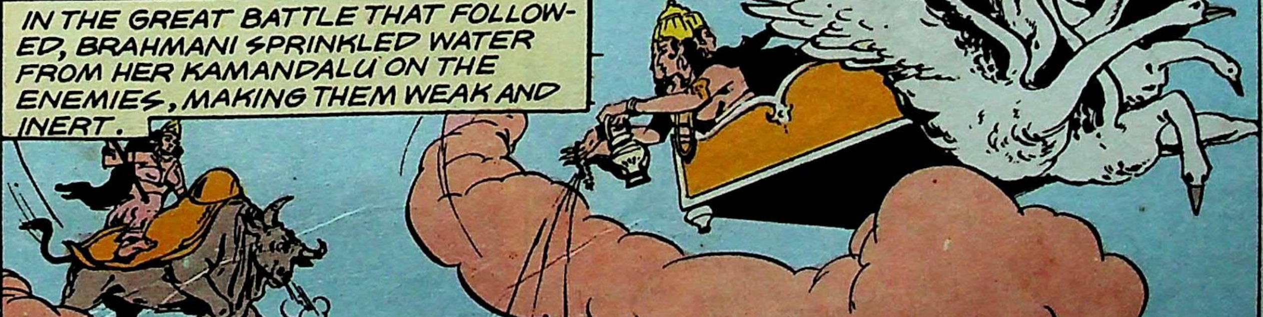
* EACH OF THESE FORMS IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN INCARNATION OF DURGA


...OUT OF VISHNU, VAISHNAVI ...


...AND OUT OF MAHESHWARA, MAHESHWARI.

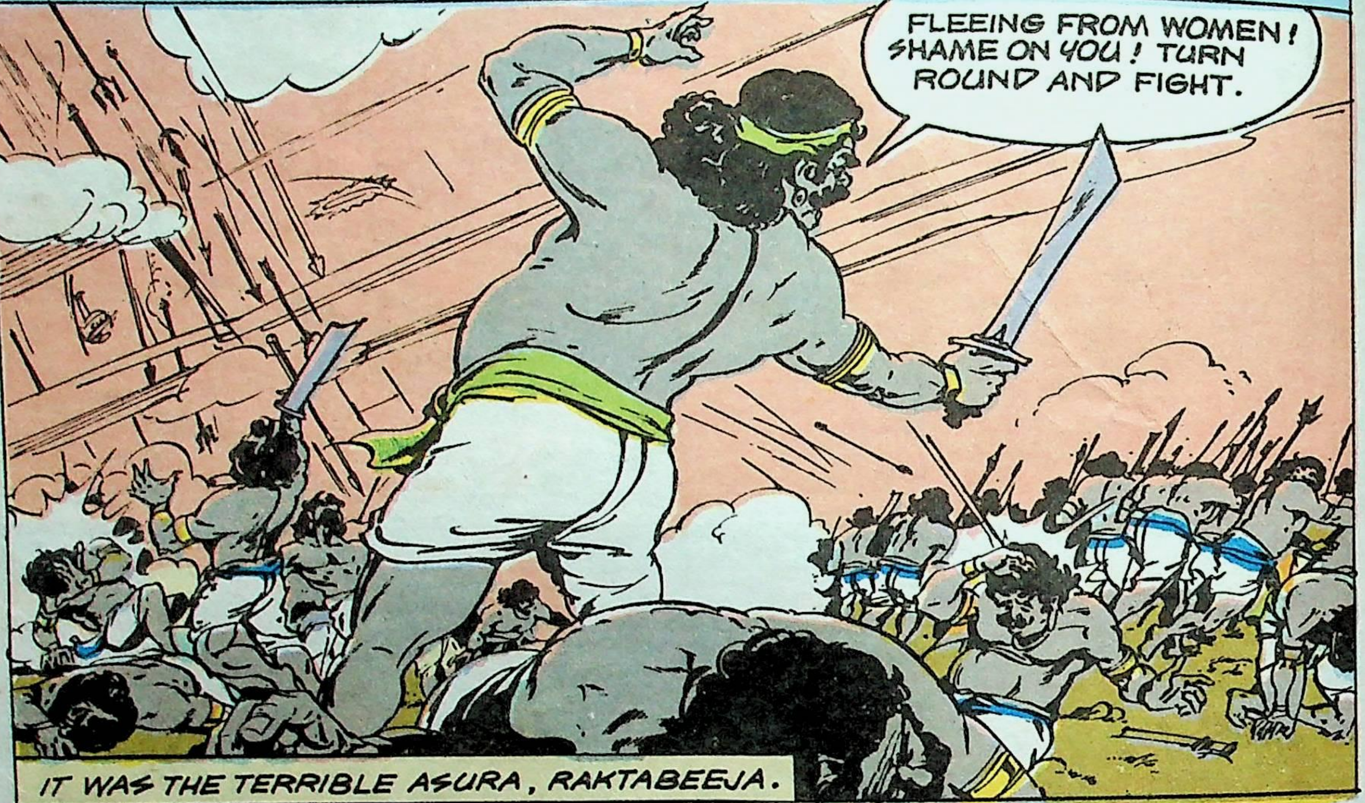

FINALLY OUT OF AMBIKA EMERGED CHANDIKA. SOON THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH HUNDREDS OF SHAKTIS.*


IN THE GREAT BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, BRAHMANI SPRINKLED WATER FROM HER KAMANDALU ON THE ENEMIES, MAKING THEM WEAK AND INERT.

---

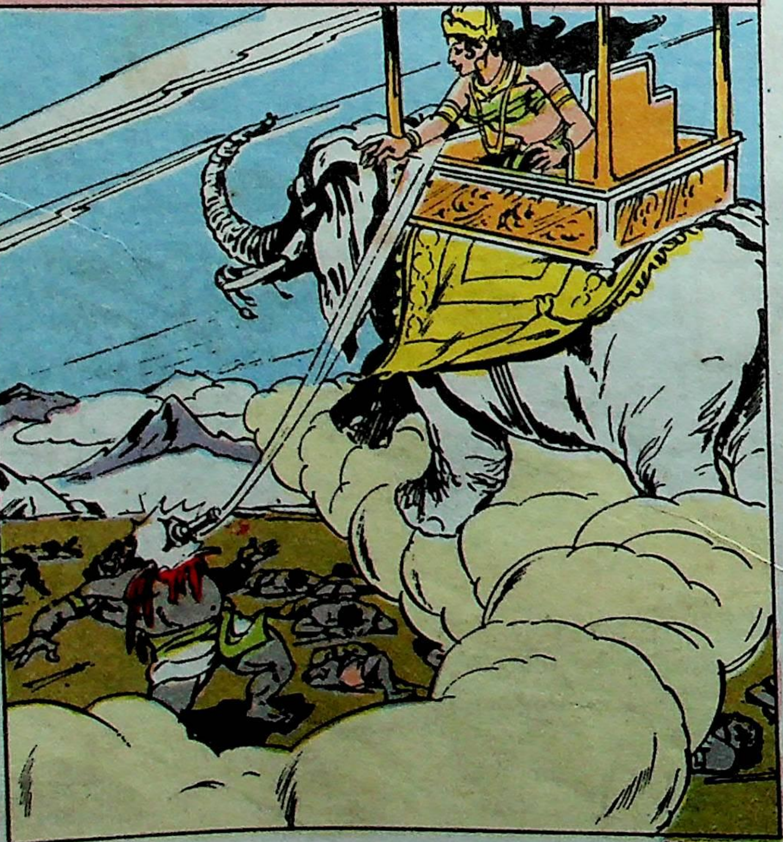
* SHAKTI = ENERGY

VAISHNAVI FOUGHT WITH THE DISCUS, MAHESHWARI WITH THE TRIDENT, AND VARIOUS OTHER SHAKTIS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE WEAPONS. UNABLE TO FACE THIS ONSLAUGHT, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO FLEE.

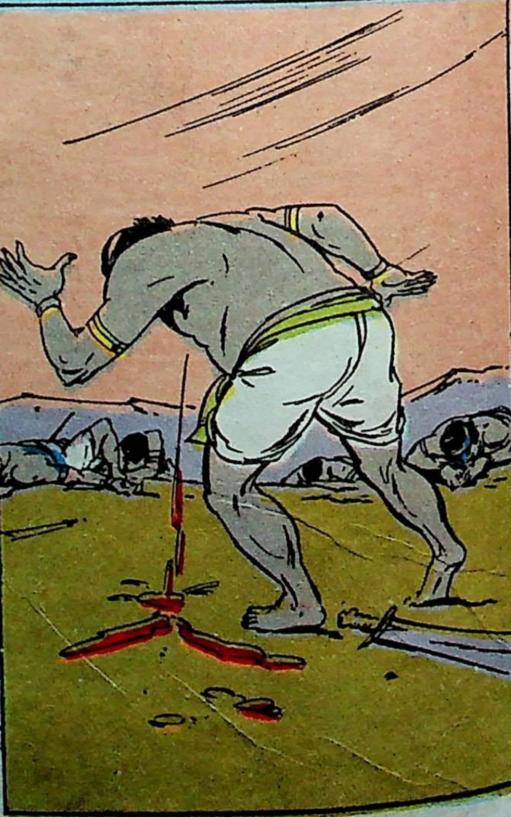

FLEEING FROM WOMEN! SHAME ON YOU! TURN ROUND AND FIGHT.

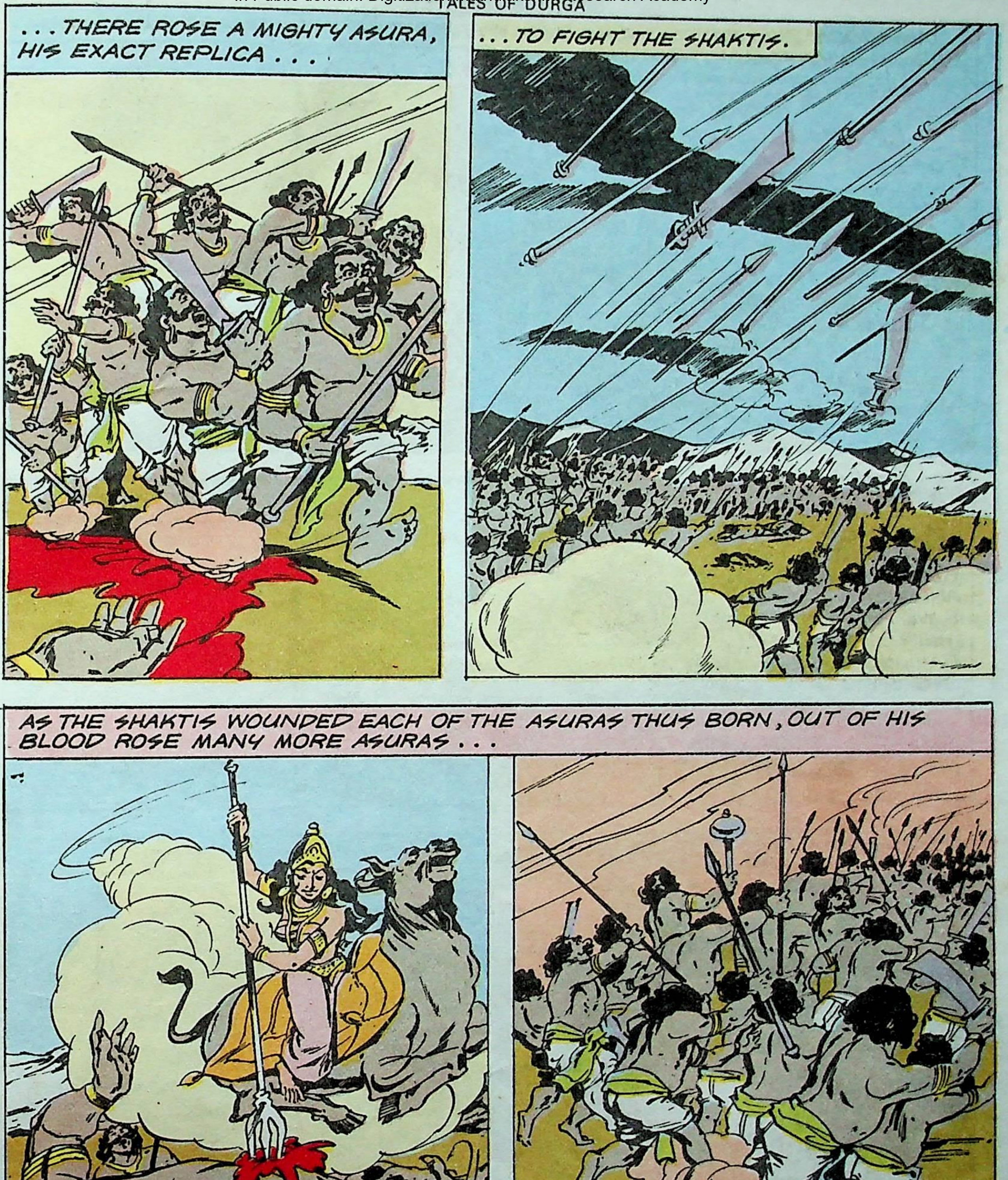
IT WAS THE TERRIBLE ASURA, RAKTABEEJA.

AS RAKTABEEJA RUSHED FORTH, INDRA'S SHAKTI STRUCK HIM WITH HER THUNDERBOLT.



AS EACH DROP OF THE BLOOD FLOWING FROM HIS WOUND TOUCHED THE GROUND . . .

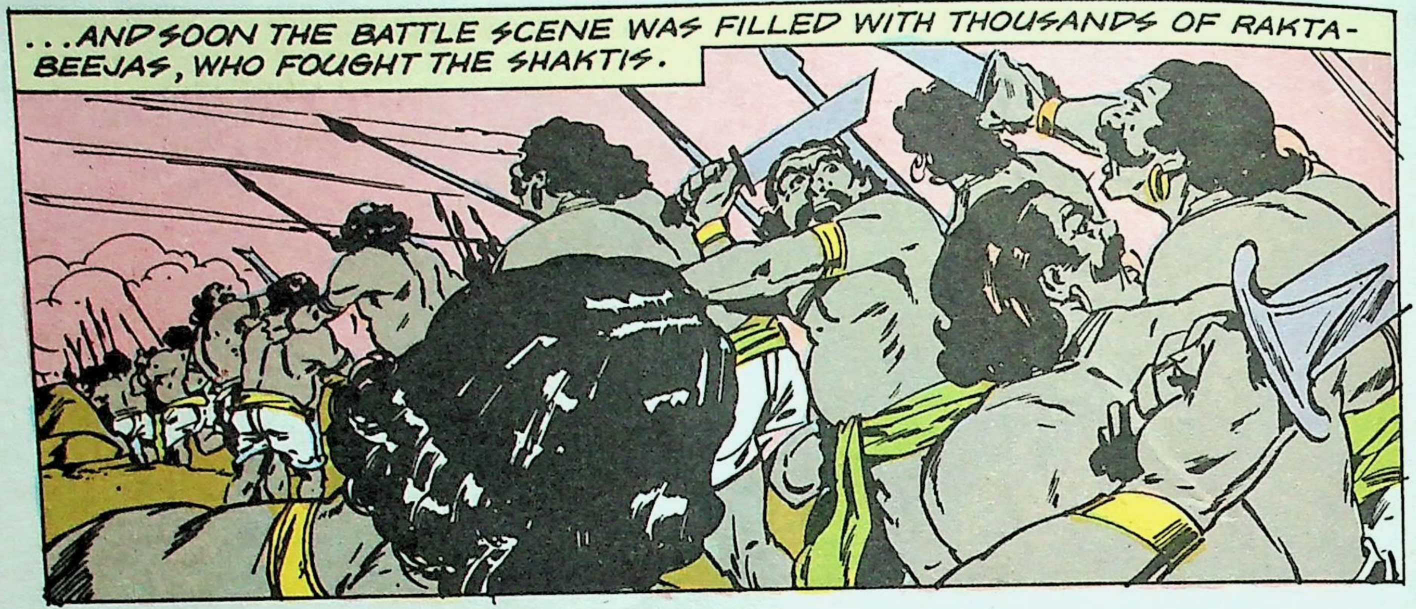


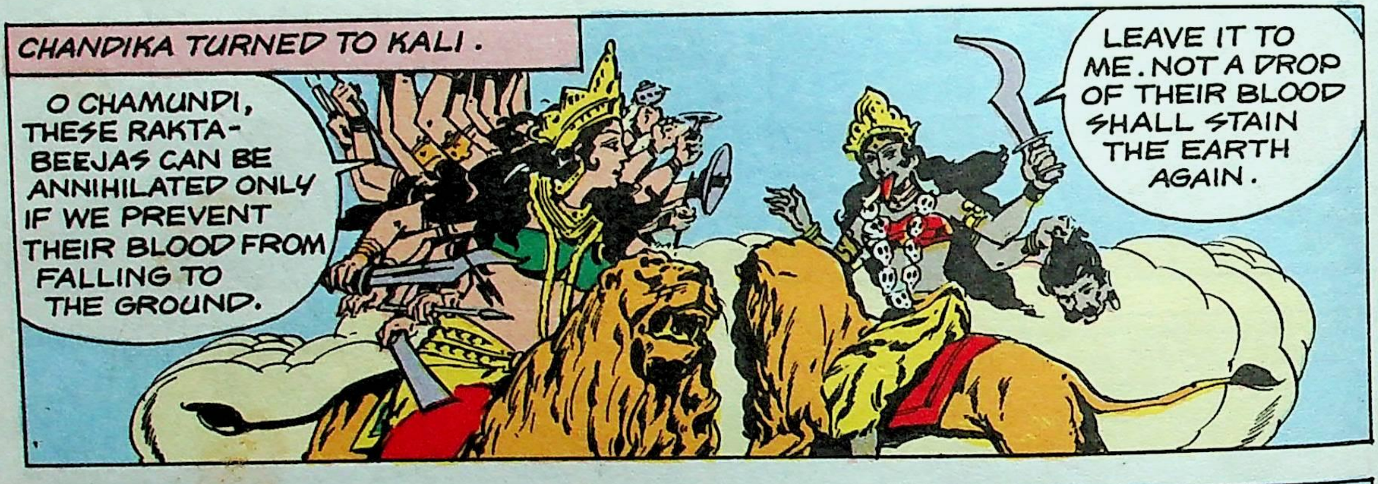


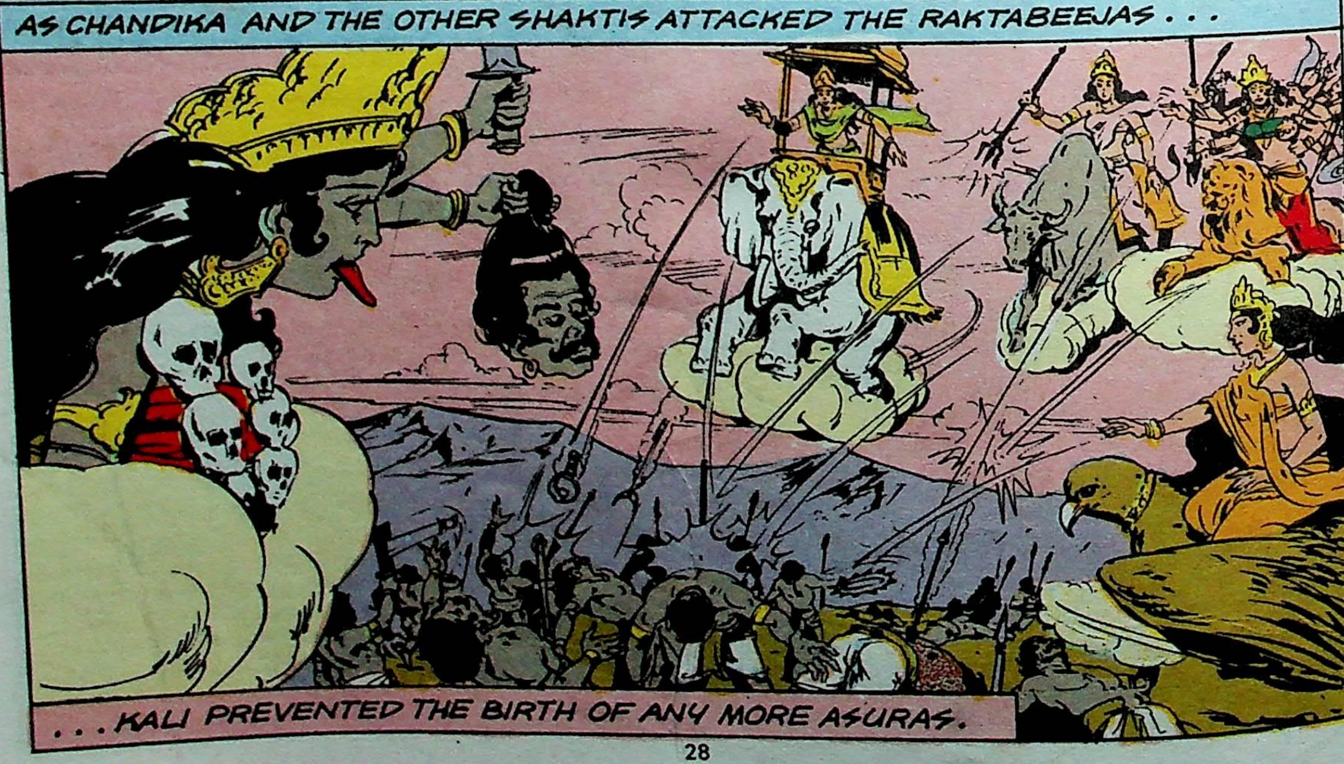
... THERE ROSE A MIGHTY ASURA, HIS EXACT REPLICA ...

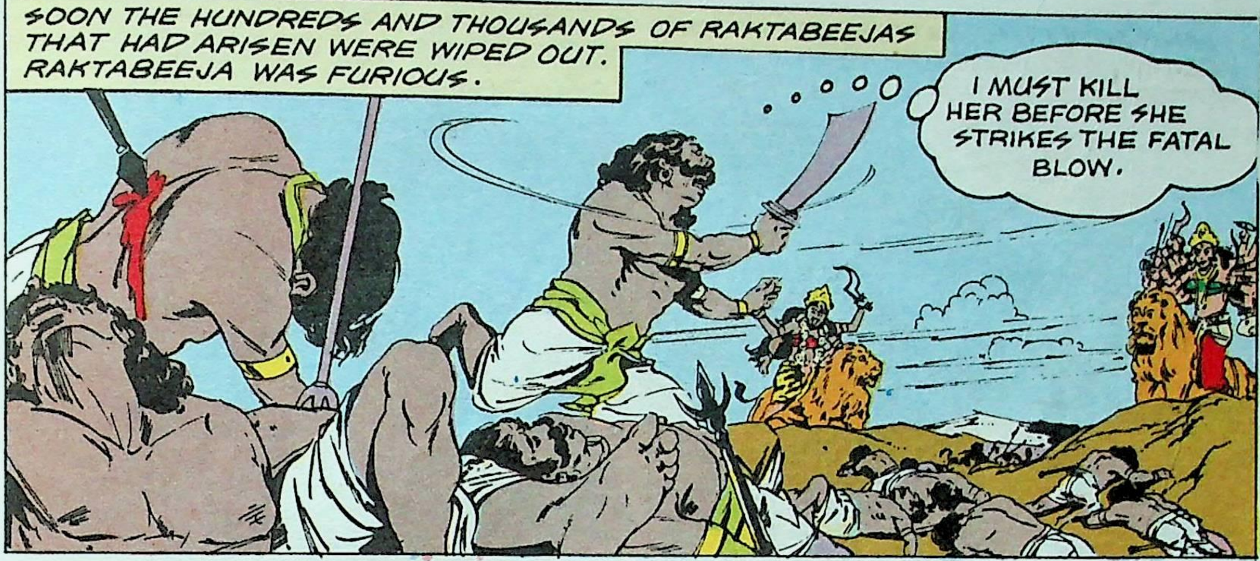
... TO FIGHT THE SHAKTIS.

AS THE SHAKTIS WOUNDED EACH OF THE ASURAS THUS BORN, OUT OF HIS BLOOD ROSE MANY MORE ASURAS ...

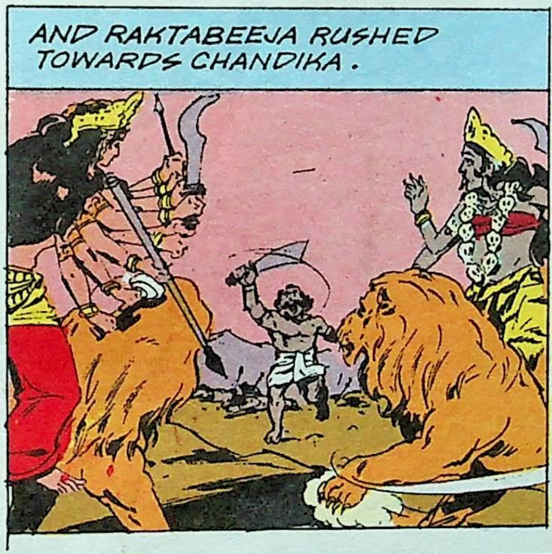

...AND SOON THE BATTLE SCENE WAS FILLED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAKTA-BEEJAS, WHO FOUGHT THE SHAKTIS.

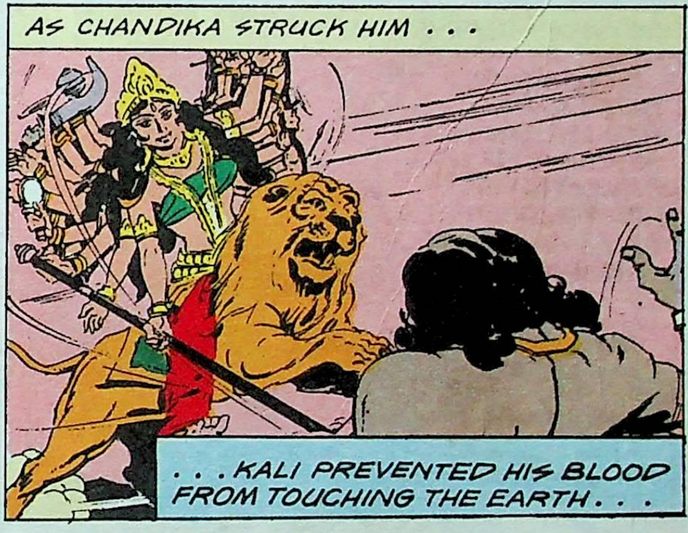

CHANDIKA TURNED TO KALI.
O CHAMUNDI, THESE RAKTA-BEEJAS CAN BE ANNIHILATED ONLY IF WE PREVENT THEIR BLOOD FROM FALLING TO THE GROUND.
LEAVE IT TO ME. NOT A DROP OF THEIR BLOOD SHALL STAIN THE EARTH AGAIN.


AS CHANDIKA AND THE OTHER SHAKTIS ATTACKED THE RAKTABEEJAS...
...KALI PREVENTED THE BIRTH OF ANY MORE ASURAS.

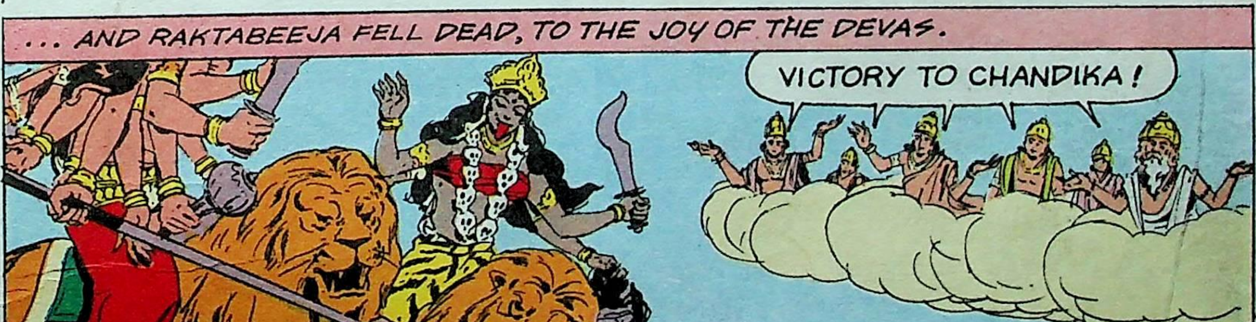

SOON THE HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF RAKTABEEJAS THAT HAD ARISEN WERE WIPED OUT. RAKTABEEJA WAS FURIOUS.

I MUST KILL HER BEFORE SHE STRIKES THE FATAL BLOW.

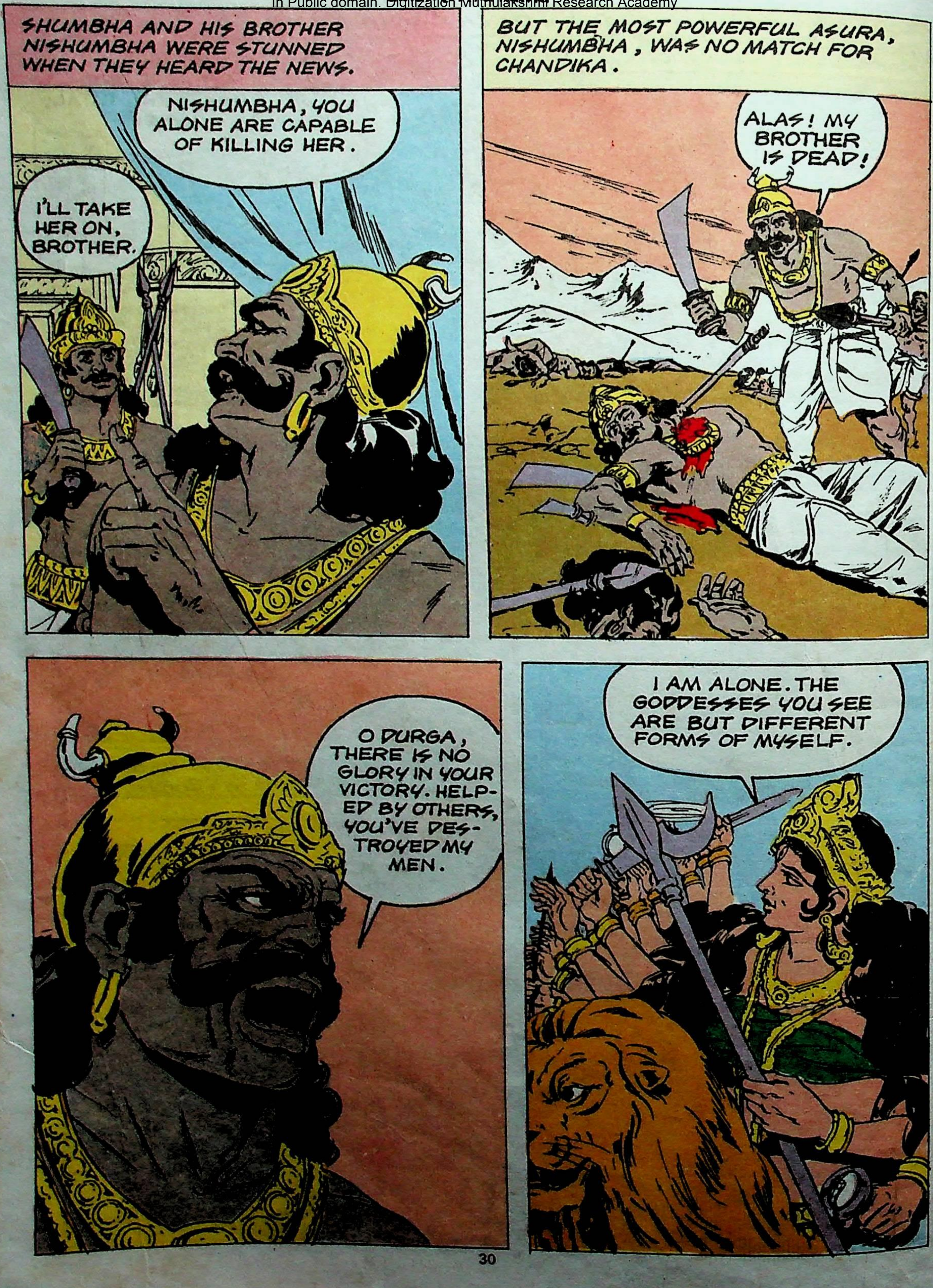

AND RAKTABEEJA RUSHED TOWARDS CHANDIKA.


AS CHANDIKA STRUCK HIM . . .

. . . KALI PREVENTED HIS BLOOD FROM TOUCHING THE EARTH . . .


... AND RAKTABEEJA FELL DEAD, TO THE JOY OF THE DEVAS.

VICTORY TO CHANDIKA!

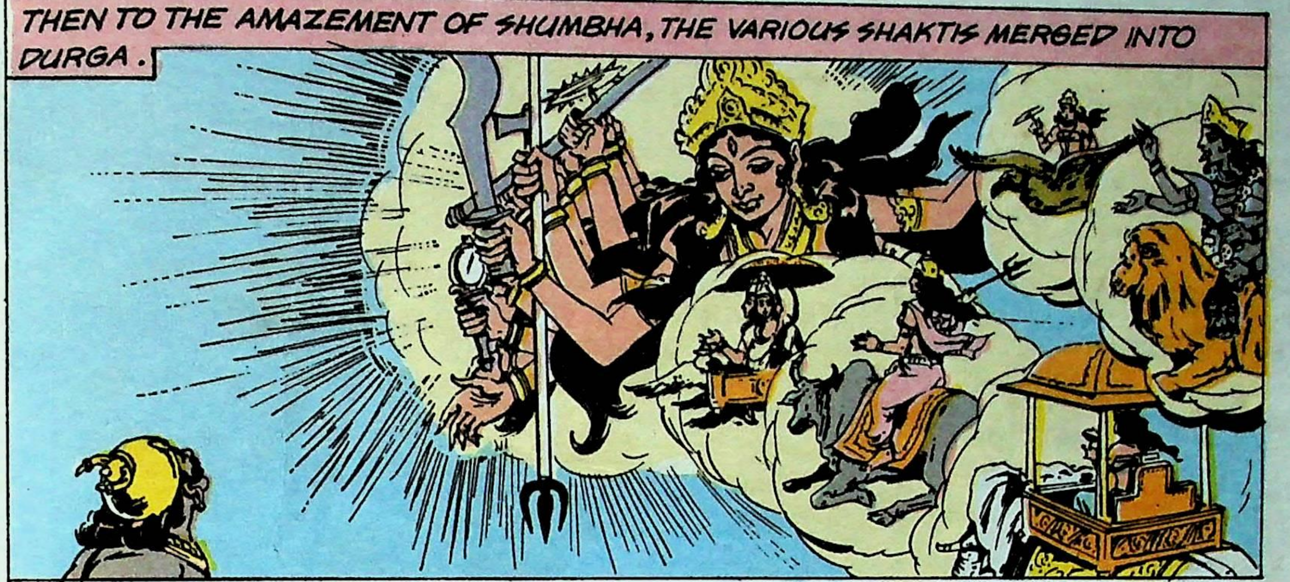


SHUMBHA AND HIS BROTHER NISHUMBHA WERE STUNNED WHEN THEY HEARD THE NEWS.

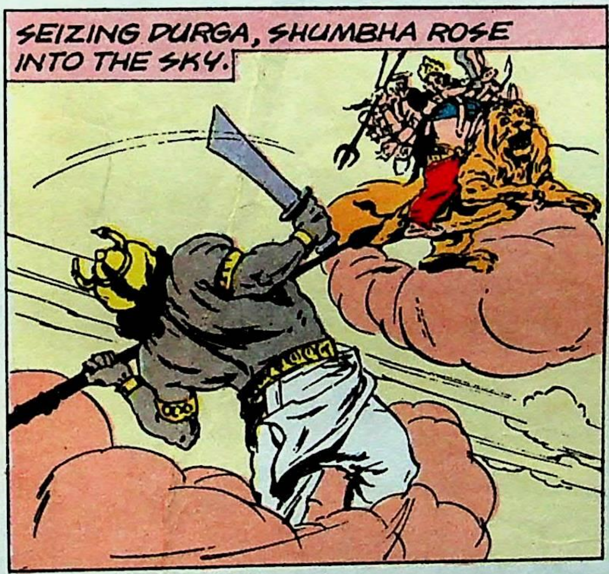
NISHUMBHA, YOU ALONE ARE CAPABLE OF KILLING HER.
I'LL TAKE HER ON, BROTHER.

BUT THE MOST POWERFUL ASURA, NISHUMBHA, WAS NO MATCH FOR CHANDIKA.

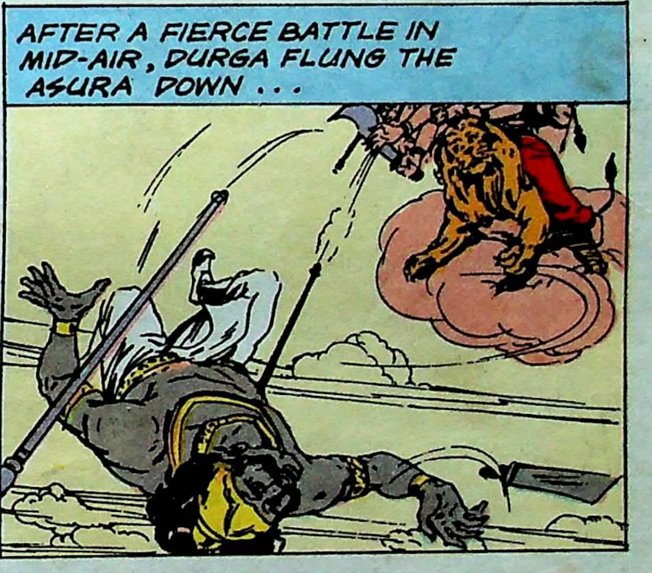
ALAS! MY BROTHER IS DEAD!
O DURGA, THERE IS NO GLORY IN YOUR VICTORY. HELPED BY OTHERS, YOU'VE DESTROYED MY MEN.
I AM ALONE. THE GODDESSES YOU SEE ARE BUT DIFFERENT FORMS OF MYSELF.



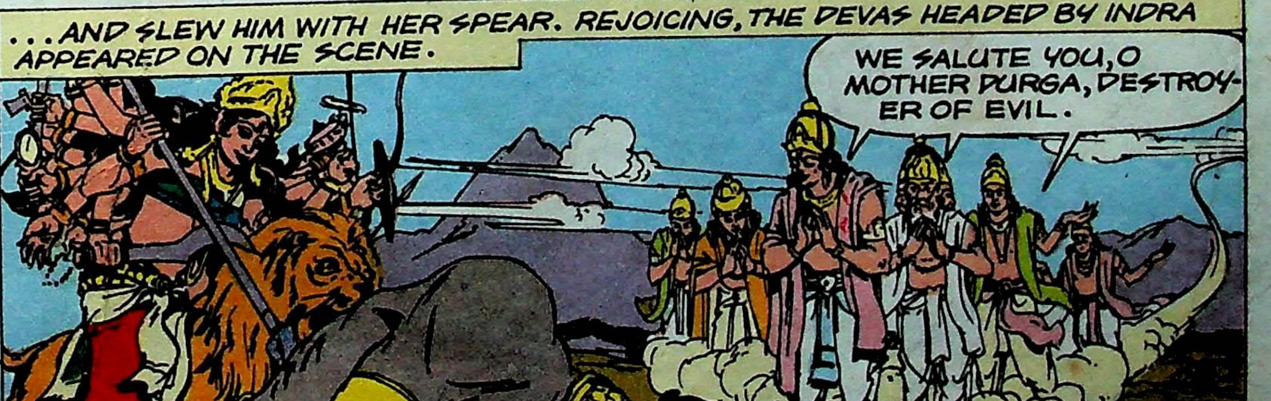
THEN TO THE AMAZEMENT OF SHUMBHA, THE VARIOUS SHAKTIS MERGED INTO DURGA.



SEIZING DURGA, SHUMBHA ROSE INTO THE SKY.



AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE IN MID-AIR, DURGA FLUNG THE ASURA DOWN . . .



. . . AND SLEW HIM WITH HER SPEAR. REJOICING, THE DEVAS HEADED BY INDRA APPEARED ON THE SCENE.

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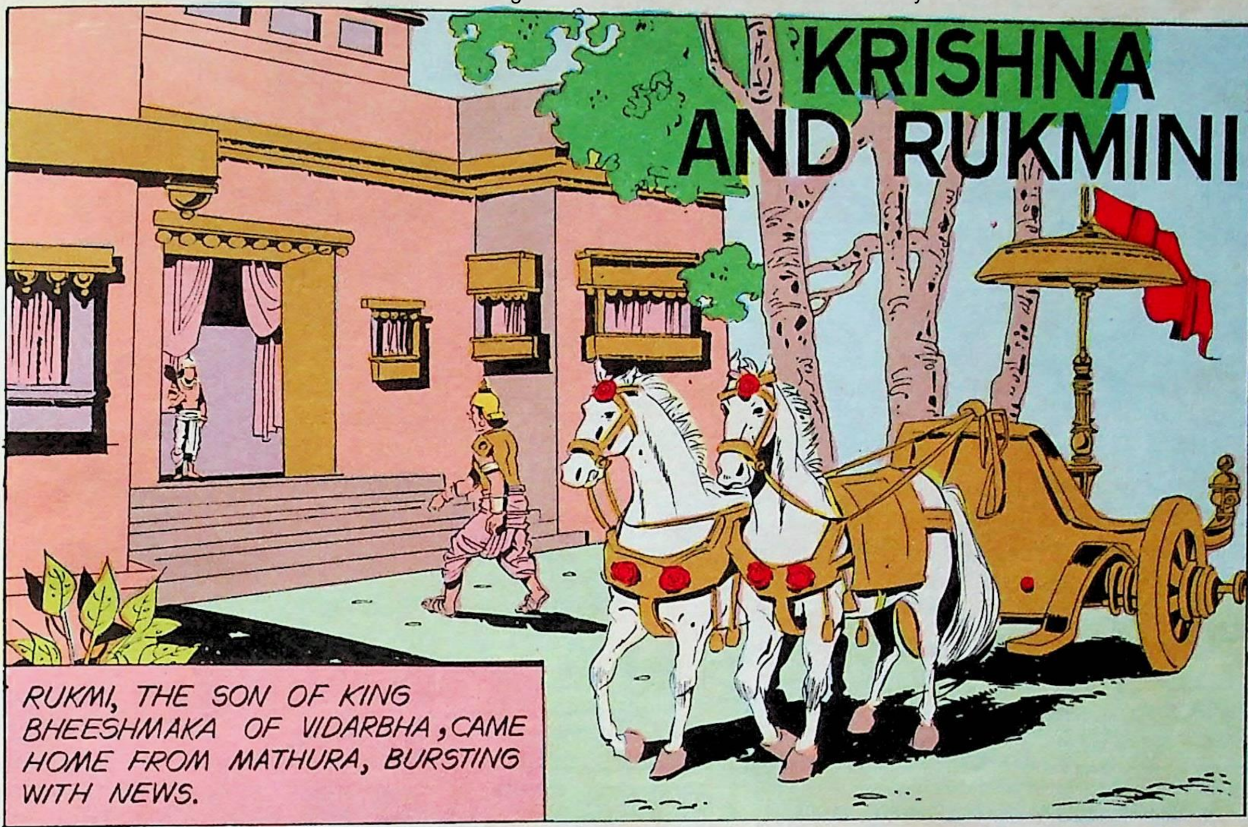
Script
Kamala Chandrakant

Illustrations
Pratap Mulick

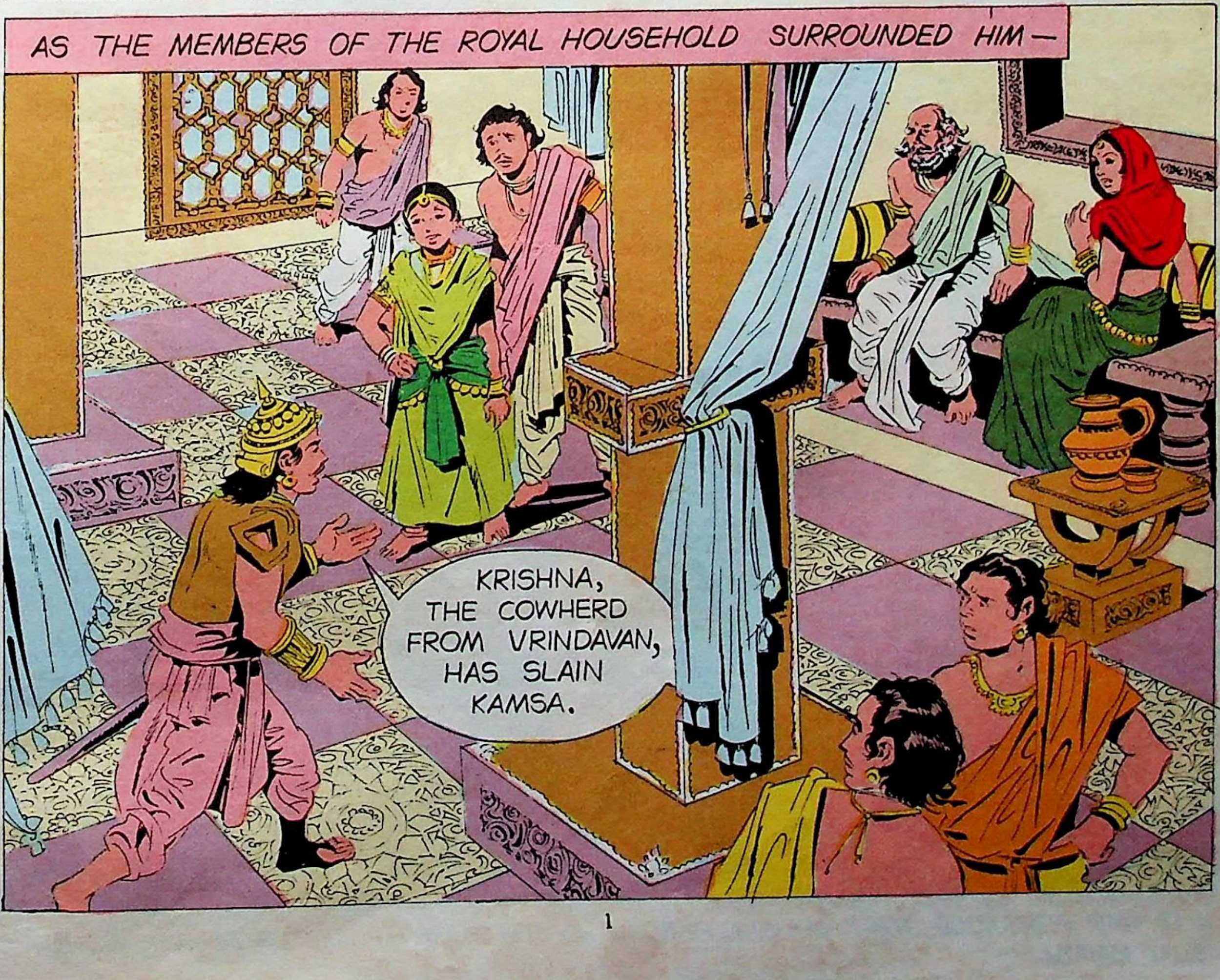
Editor
Anant Pai

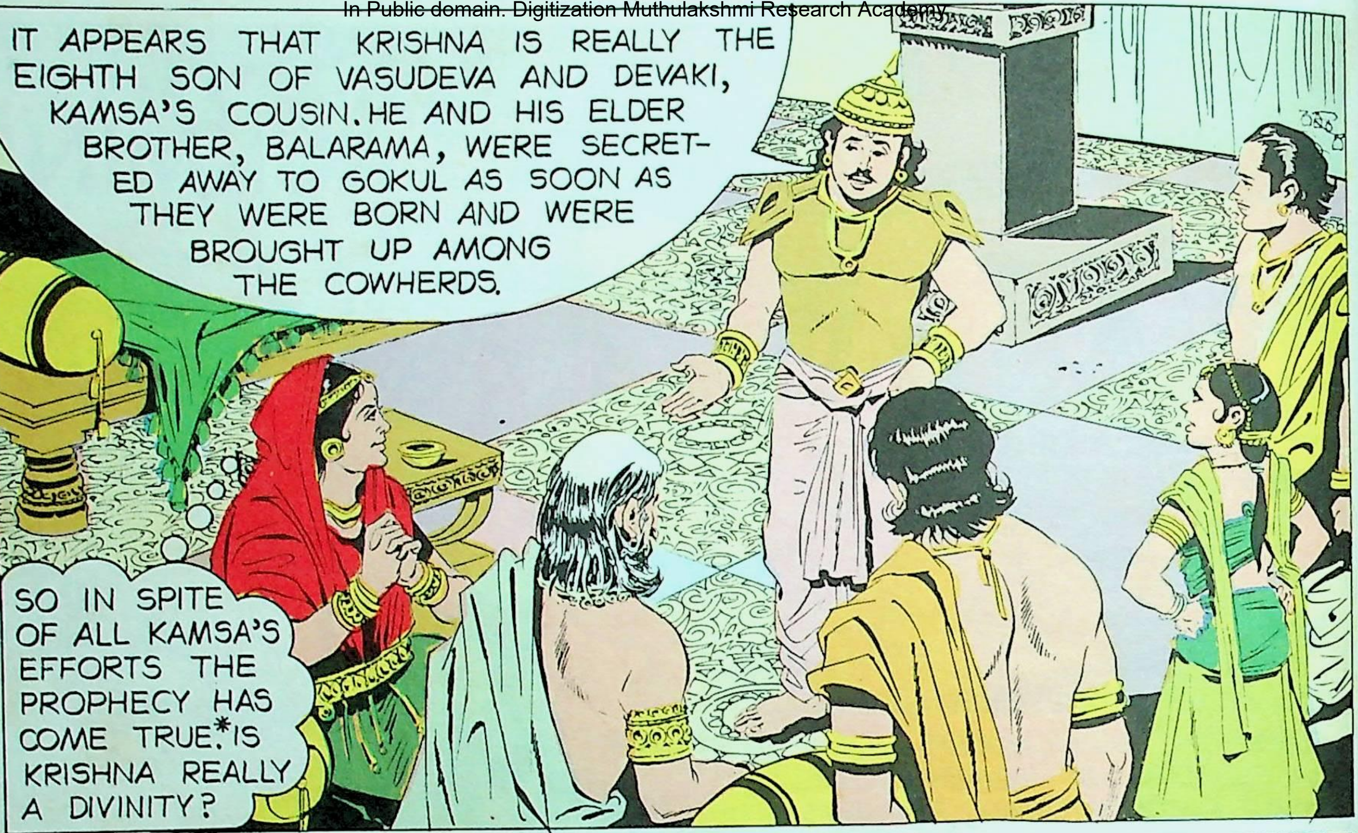
KRISHNA AND RUKMINI

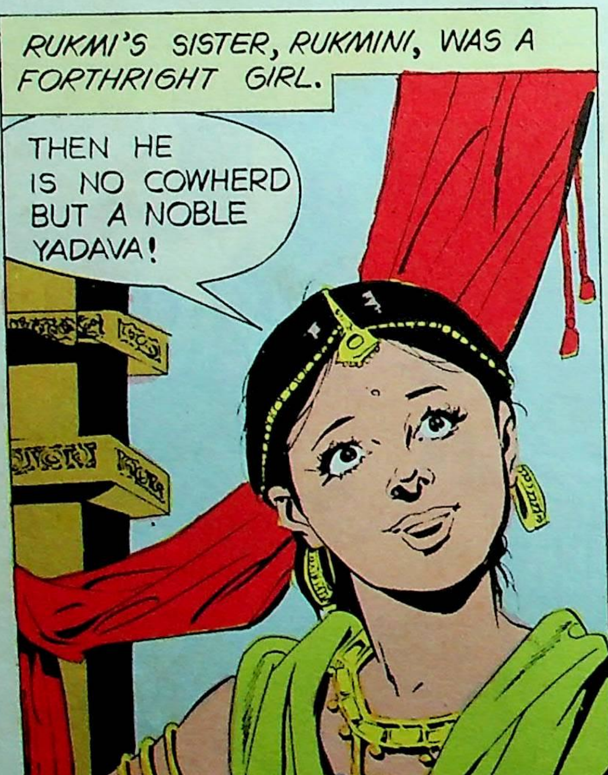


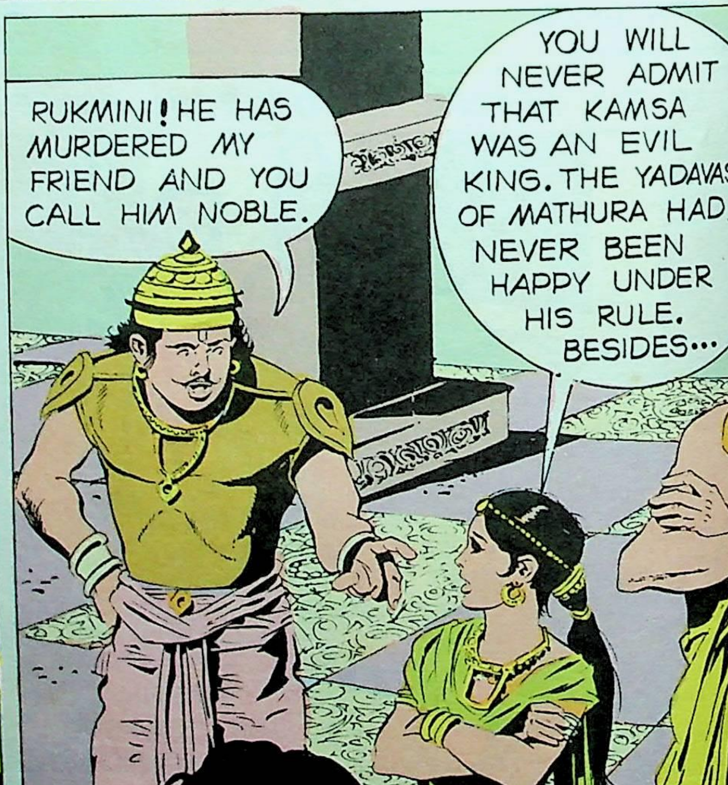
RUKMI, THE SON OF KING BHEESHMAKA OF VIDARBHA, CAME HOME FROM MATHURA, BURSTING WITH NEWS.

AS THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD SURROUNDED HIM—

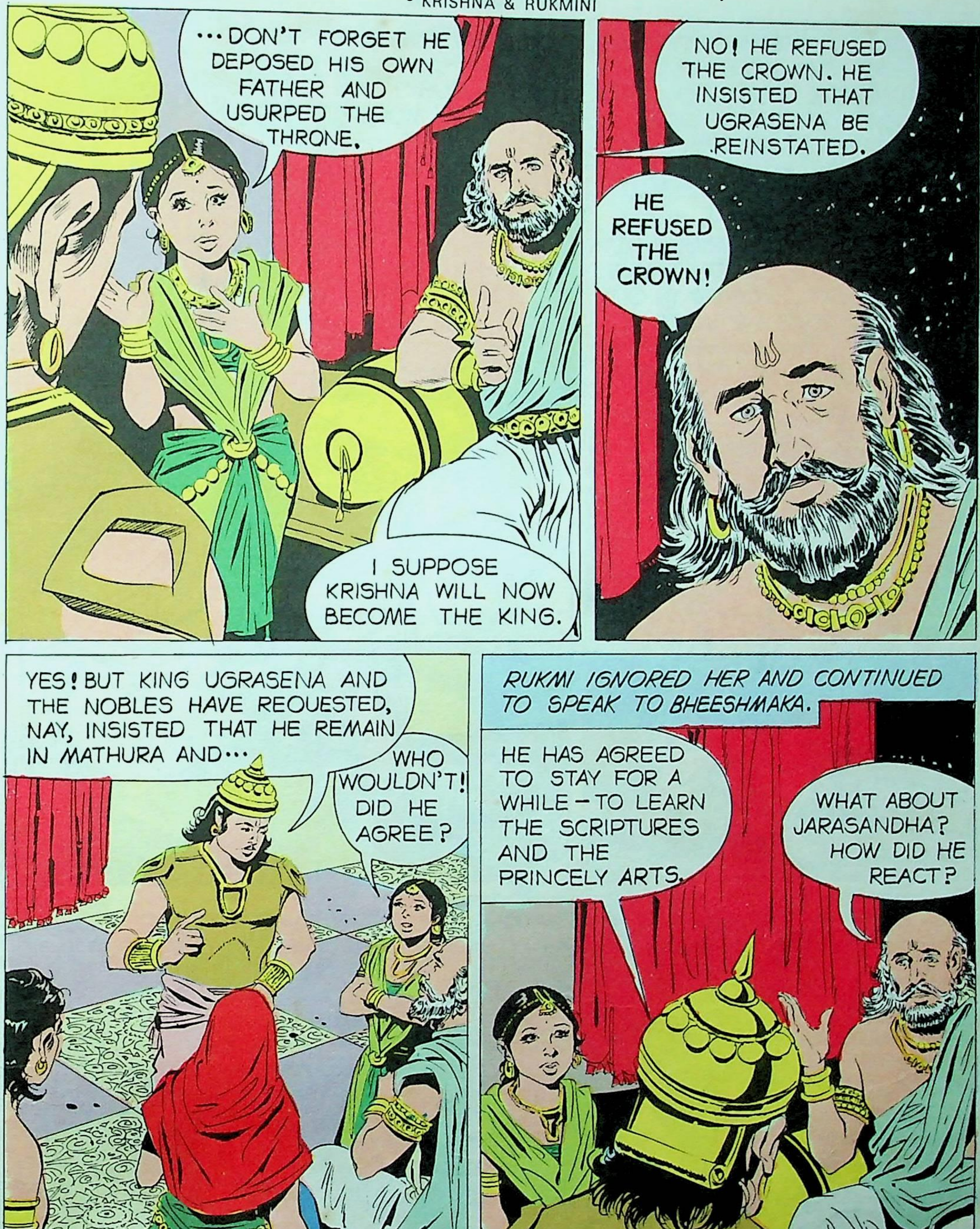

KRISHNA, THE COWHERD FROM VRINDAVAN, HAS SLAIN KAMSA.

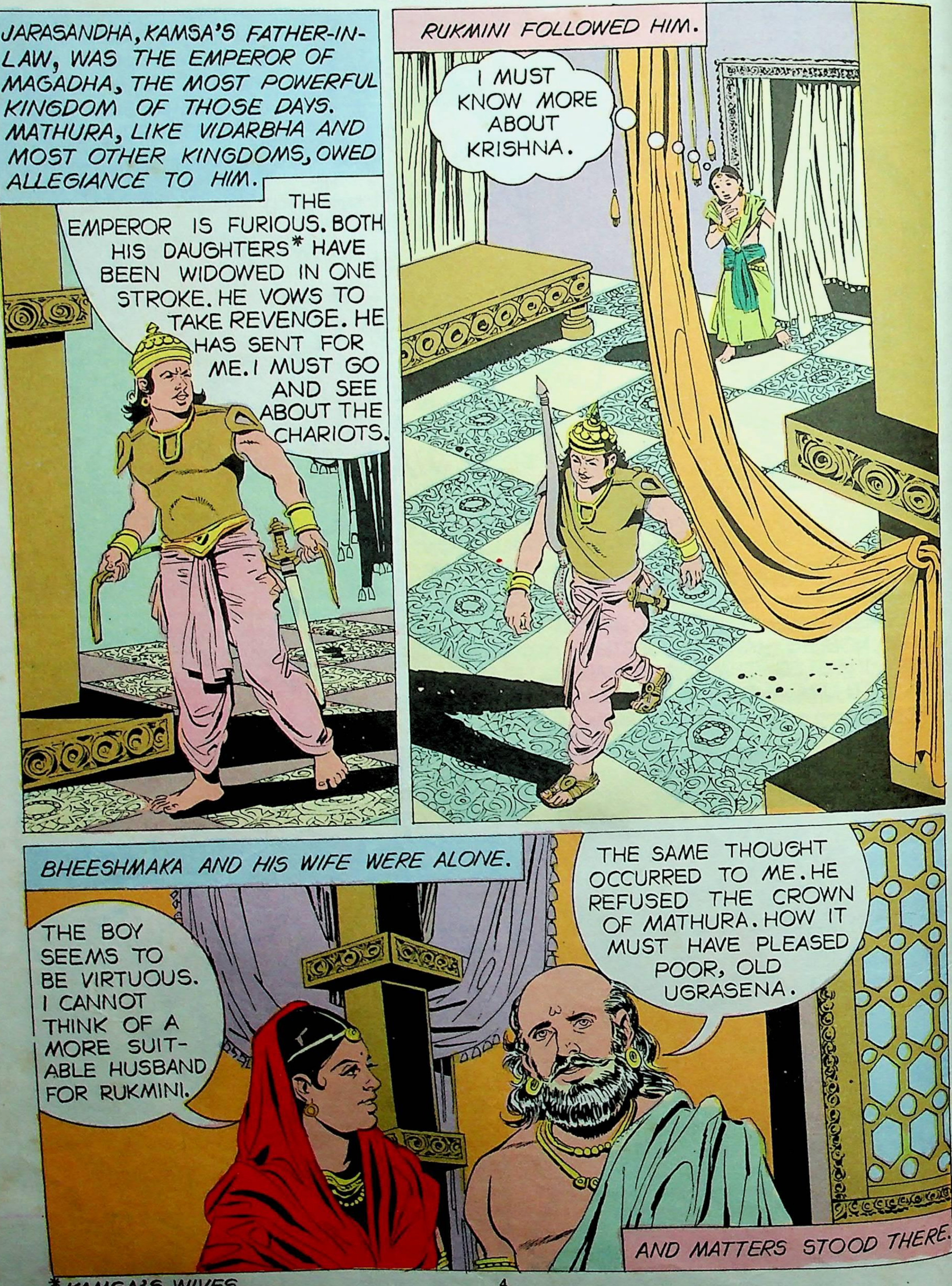

IT APPEARS THAT KRISHNA IS REALLY THE EIGHTH SON OF VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI, KAMSA'S COUSIN. HE AND HIS ELDER BROTHER, BALARAMA, WERE SECRETED AWAY TO GOKUL AS SOON AS THEY WERE BORN AND WERE BROUGHT UP AMONG THE COWHERDS.
SO IN SPITE OF ALL KAMSA'S EFFORTS THE PROPHECY HAS COME TRUE.* IS KRISHNA REALLY A DIVINITY?


RUKMI'S SISTER, RUKMINI, WAS A FORTHRIGHT GIRL.
THEN HE IS NO COWHERD BUT A NOBLE YADAVA!


RUKMINI! HE HAS MURDERED MY FRIEND AND YOU CALL HIM NOBLE.
YOU WILL NEVER ADMIT THAT KAMSA WAS AN EVIL KING. THE YADAVAS OF MATHURA HAD NEVER BEEN HAPPY UNDER HIS RULE. BESIDES...

** IT WAS FORETOLD THAT VISHNU, REBORN AS THE EIGHTH SON OF DEVAKI, WOULD SLAY KAMSA.*


···DON'T FORGET HE DEPOSED HIS OWN FATHER AND USURPED THE THRONE.
I SUPPOSE KRISHNA WILL NOW BECOME THE KING.
NO! HE REFUSED THE CROWN. HE INSISTED THAT UGRASENA BE REINSTATED.
HE REFUSED THE CROWN!
YES! BUT KING UGRASENA AND THE NOBLES HAVE REQUESTED, NAY, INSISTED THAT HE REMAIN IN MATHURA AND···
WHO WOULDN'T! DID HE AGREE?
RUKMI IGNORED HER AND CONTINUED TO SPEAK TO BHEESHMAKA.
HE HAS AGREED TO STAY FOR A WHILE – TO LEARN THE SCRIPTURES AND THE PRINCELY ARTS.
WHAT ABOUT JARASANDHA? HOW DID HE REACT?


JARASANDHA, KAMSA'S FATHER-IN-LAW, WAS THE EMPEROR OF MAGADHA, THE MOST POWERFUL KINGDOM OF THOSE DAYS. MATHURA, LIKE VIDARBHA AND MOST OTHER KINGDOMS, OWED ALLEGIANCE TO HIM.
THE EMPEROR IS FURIOUS. BOTH HIS DAUGHTERS* HAVE BEEN WIDOWED IN ONE STROKE. HE VOWS TO TAKE REVENGE. HE HAS SENT FOR ME. I MUST GO AND SEE ABOUT THE CHARIOTS.
RUKMINI FOLLOWED HIM.
I MUST KNOW MORE ABOUT KRISHNA.
BHEESHMAKA AND HIS WIFE WERE ALONE.
THE BOY SEEMS TO BE VIRTUOUS. I CANNOT THINK OF A MORE SUITABLE HUSBAND FOR RUKMINI.
THE SAME THOUGHT OCCURRED TO ME. HE REFUSED THE CROWN OF MATHURA. HOW IT MUST HAVE PLEASED POOR, OLD UGRASENA.
AND MATTERS STOOD THERE.

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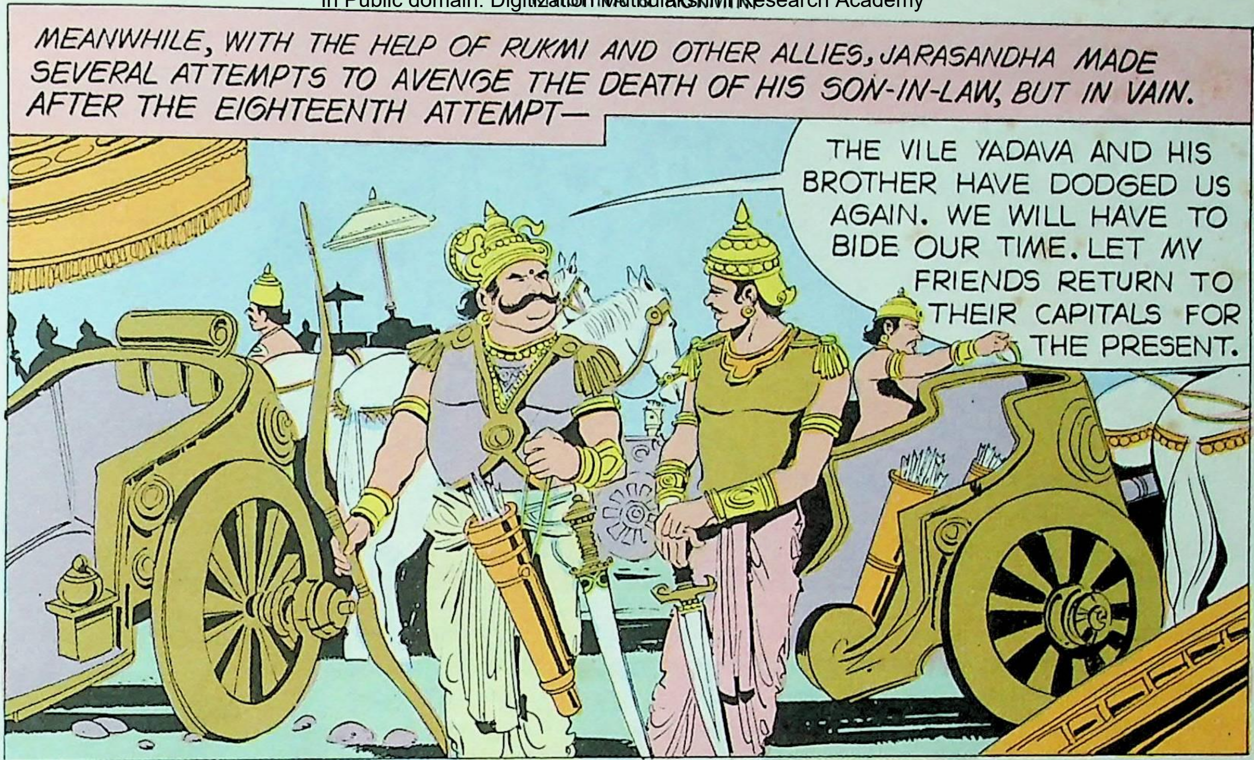
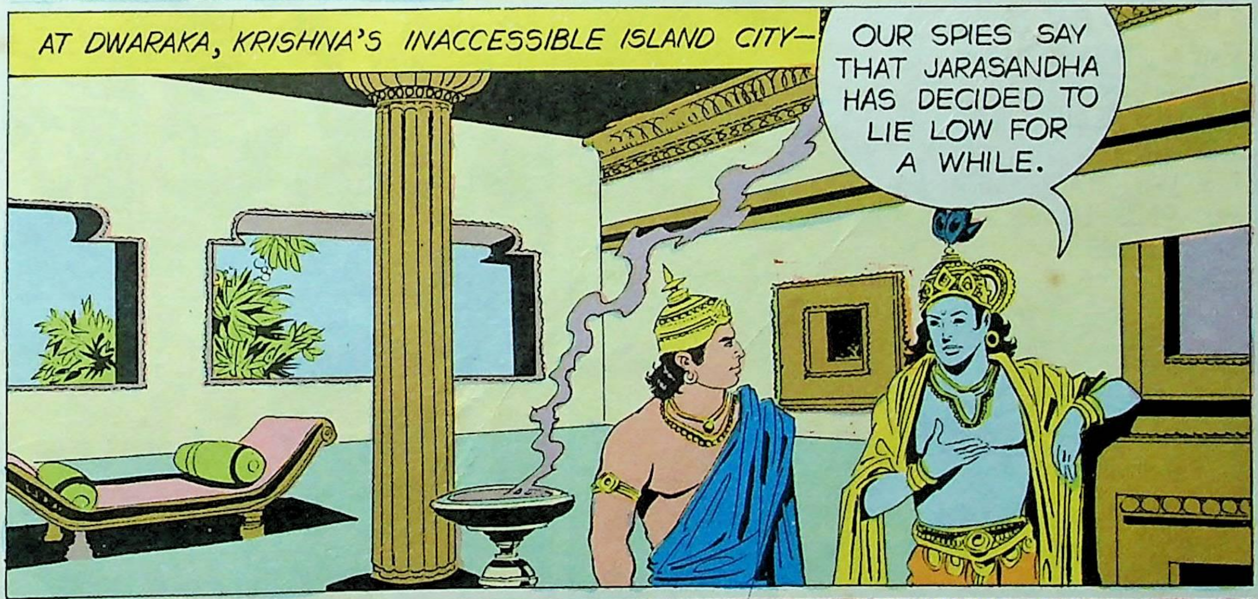
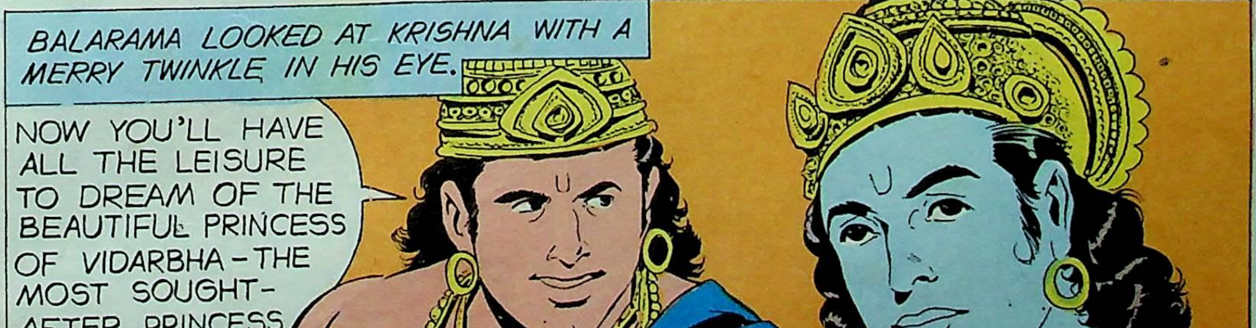
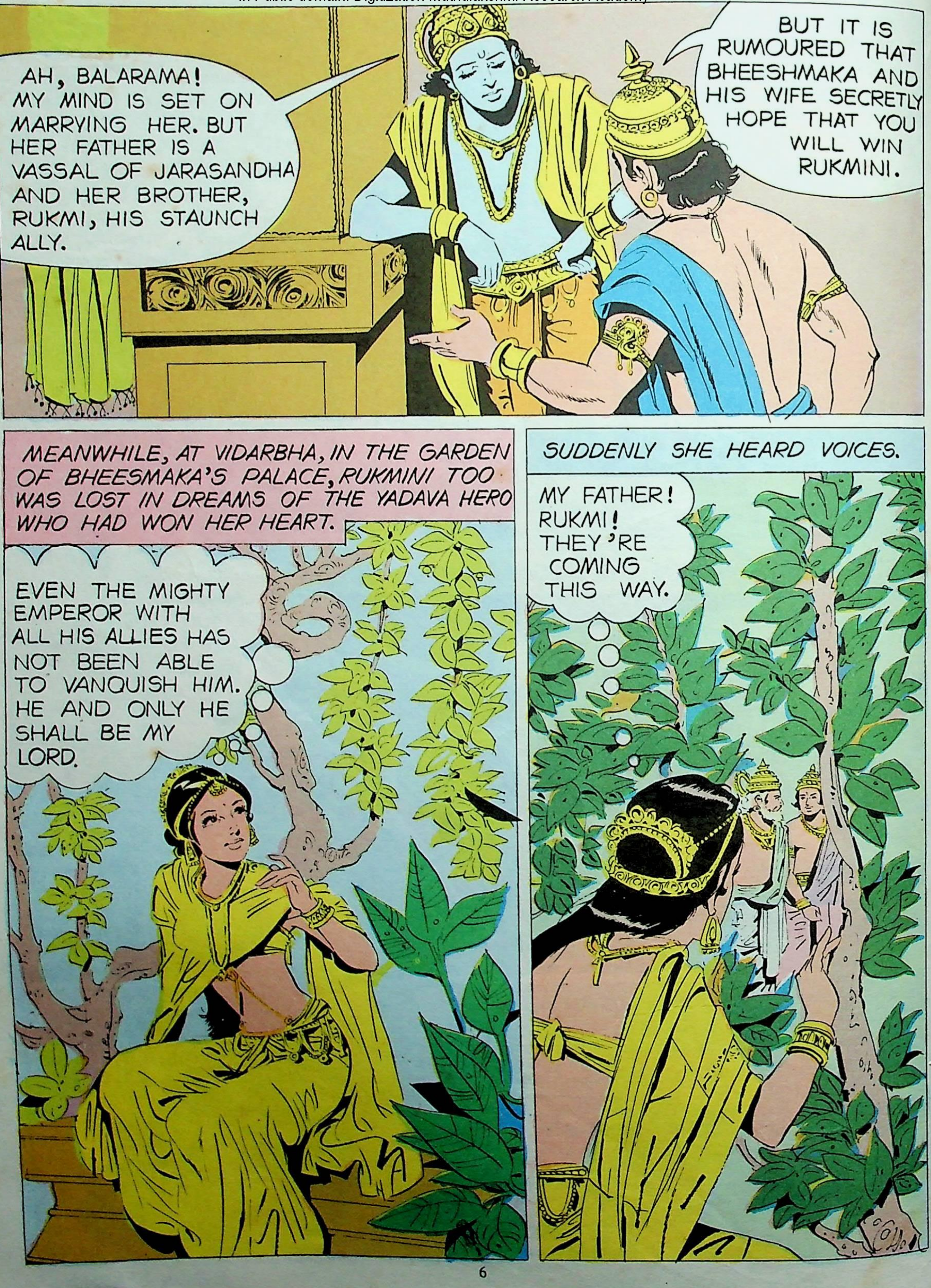
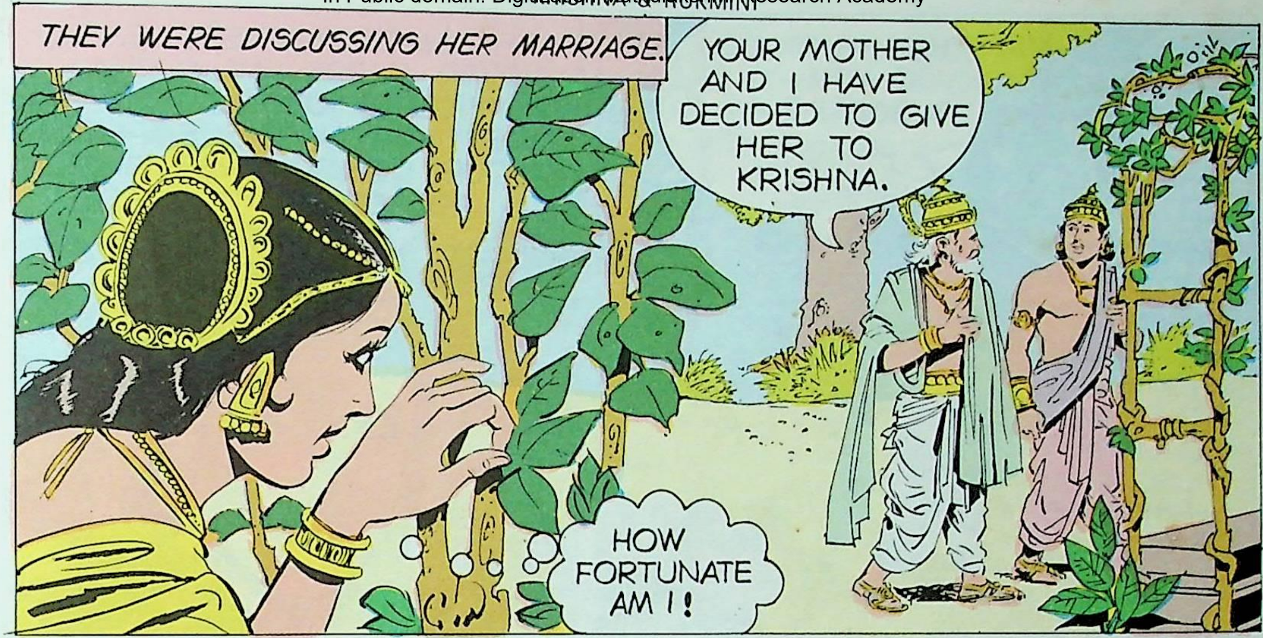
*KAMSA'S WIVES.

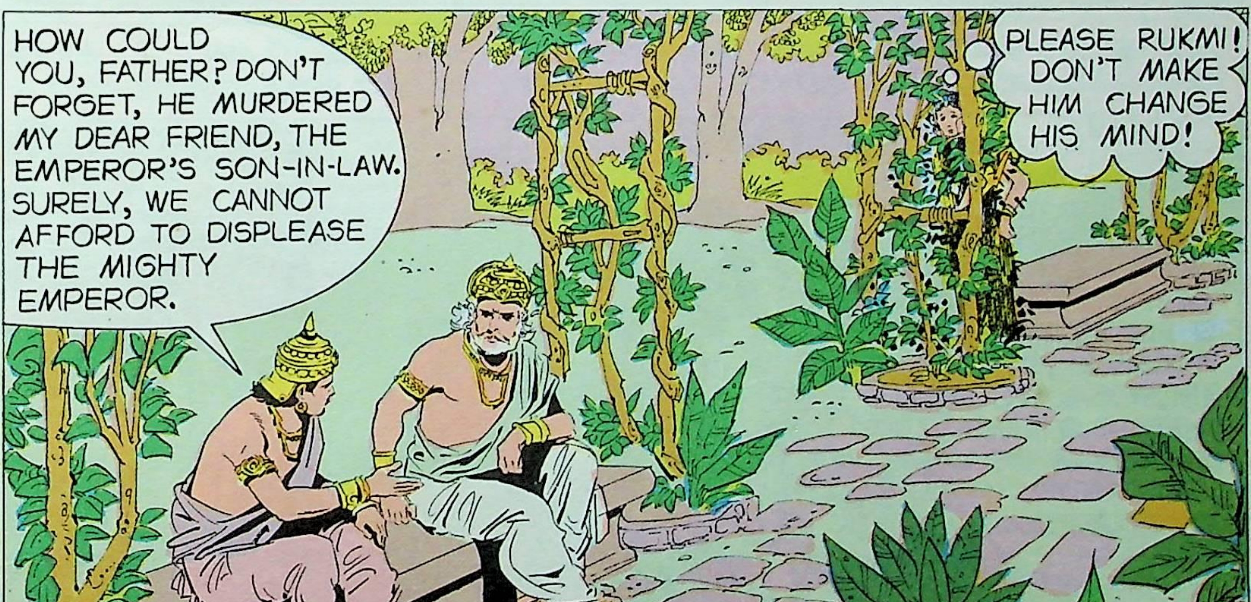

MEANWHILE, WITH THE HELP OF RUKMI AND OTHER ALLIES, JARASANDHA MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS SON-IN-LAW, BUT IN VAIN. AFTER THE EIGHTEENTH ATTEMPT—
THE VILE YADAVA AND HIS BROTHER HAVE DODGED US AGAIN. WE WILL HAVE TO BIDE OUR TIME. LET MY FRIENDS RETURN TO THEIR CAPITALS FOR THE PRESENT.

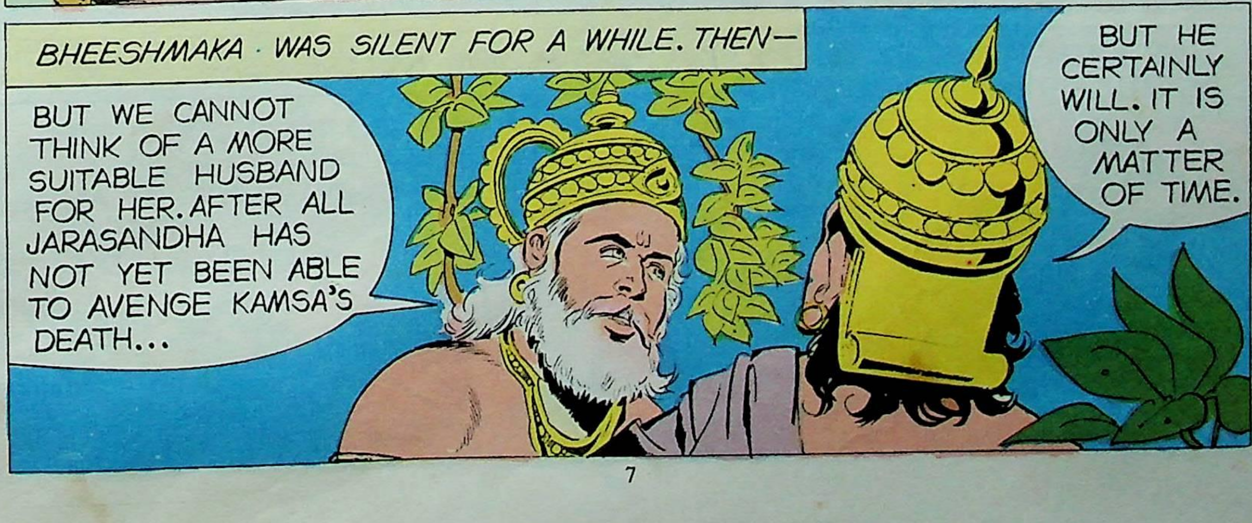

AT DWARAKA, KRISHNA'S INACCESSIBLE ISLAND CITY—
OUR SPIES SAY THAT JARASANDHA HAS DECIDED TO LIE LOW FOR A WHILE.

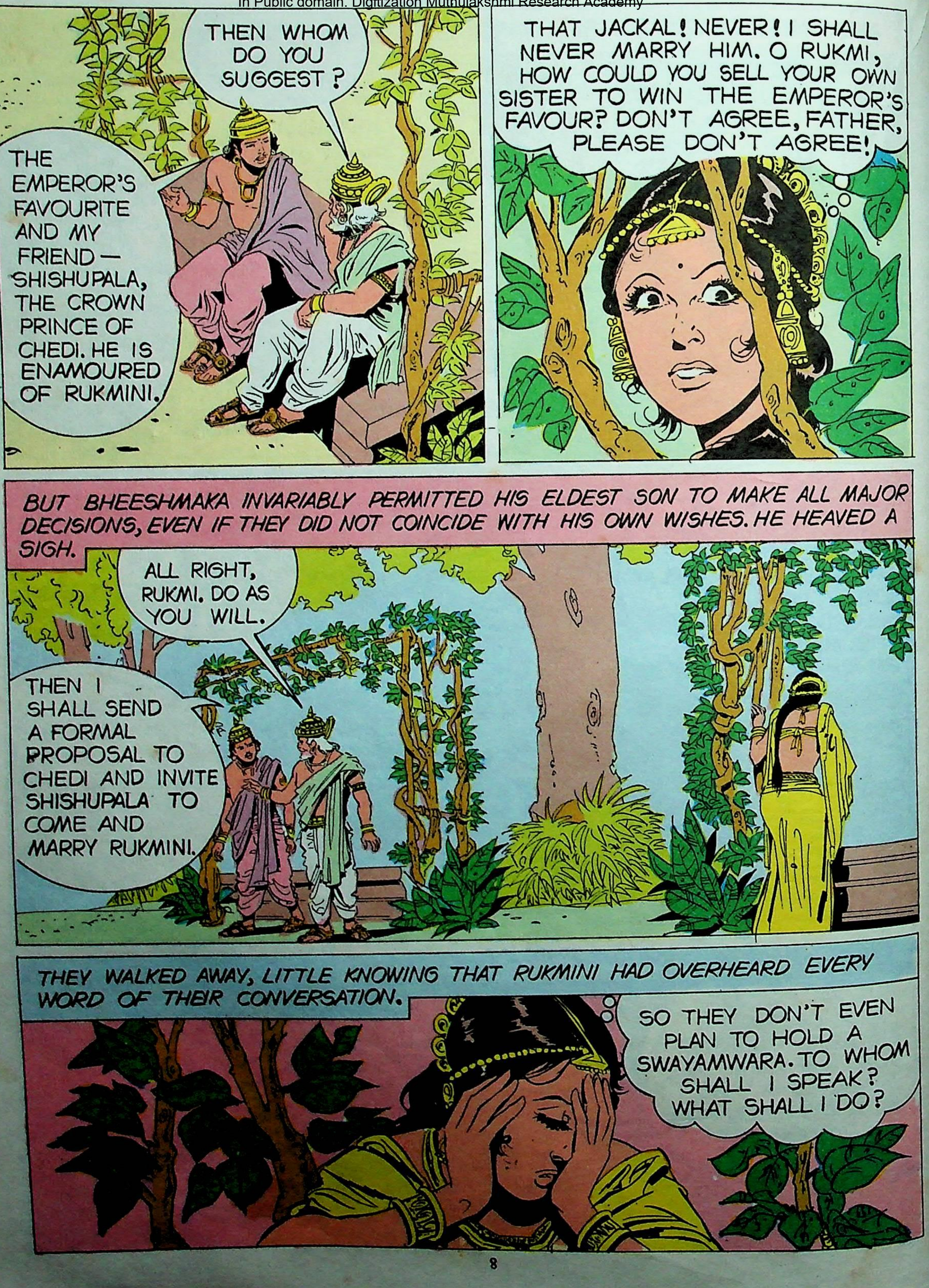

BALARAMA LOOKED AT KRISHNA WITH A MERRY TWINKLE IN HIS EYE.
NOW YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE LEISURE TO DREAM OF THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS OF VIDARBHA—THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PRINCESS ON EARTH.

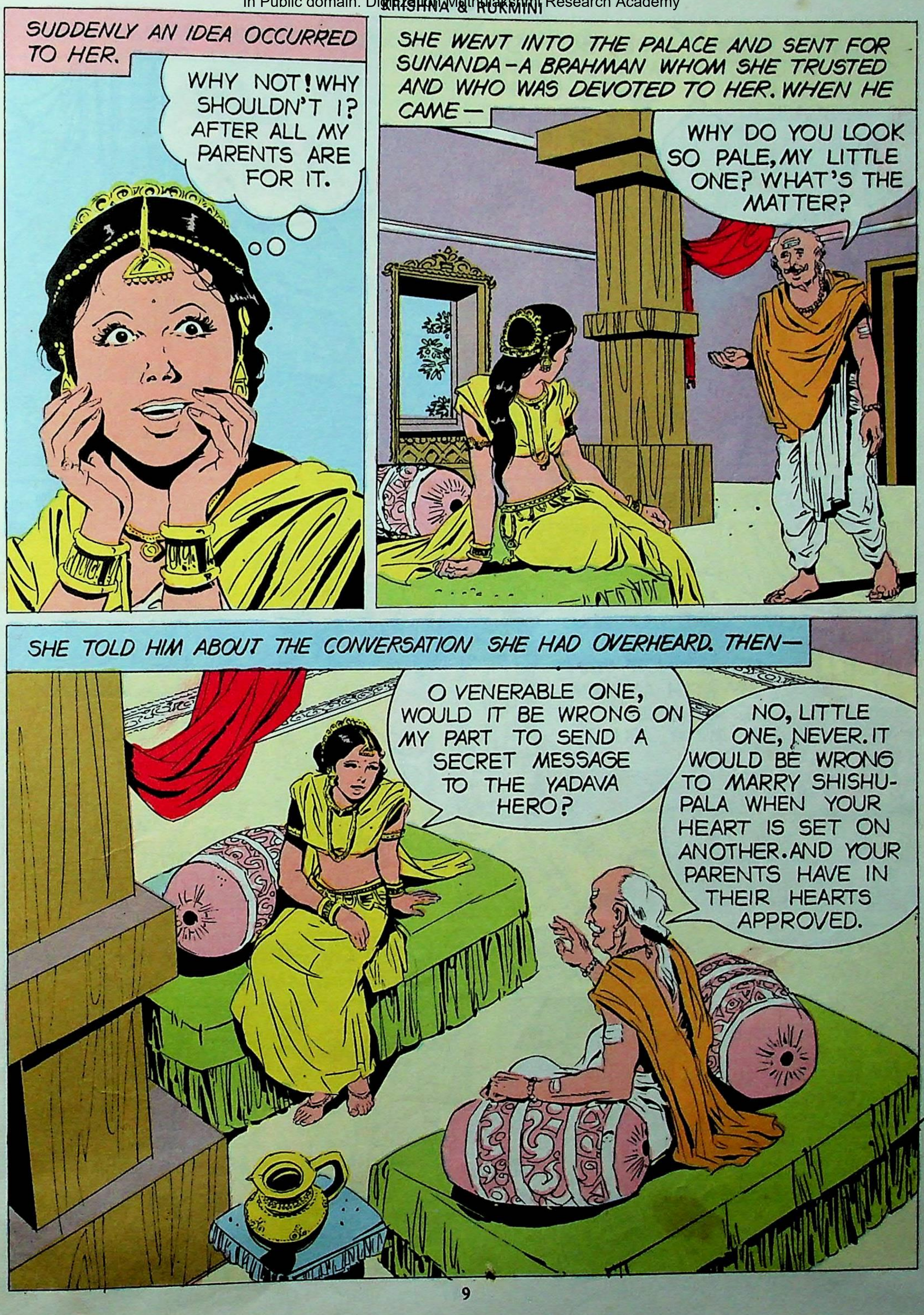

AH, BALARAMA! MY MIND IS SET ON MARRYING HER. BUT HER FATHER IS A VASSAL OF JARASANDHA AND HER BROTHER, RUKMI, HIS STAUNCH ALLY.
BUT IT IS RUMOURED THAT BHEESHMAKA AND HIS WIFE SECRETLY HOPE THAT YOU WILL WIN RUKMINI.
MEANWHILE, AT VIDARBHA, IN THE GARDEN OF BHEESMAKA'S PALACE, RUKMINI TOO WAS LOST IN DREAMS OF THE YADAVA HERO WHO HAD WON HER HEART.
EVEN THE MIGHTY EMPEROR WITH ALL HIS ALLIES HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO VANQUISH HIM. HE AND ONLY HE SHALL BE MY LORD.
SUDDENLY SHE HEARD VOICES.
MY FATHER! RUKMI! THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY.

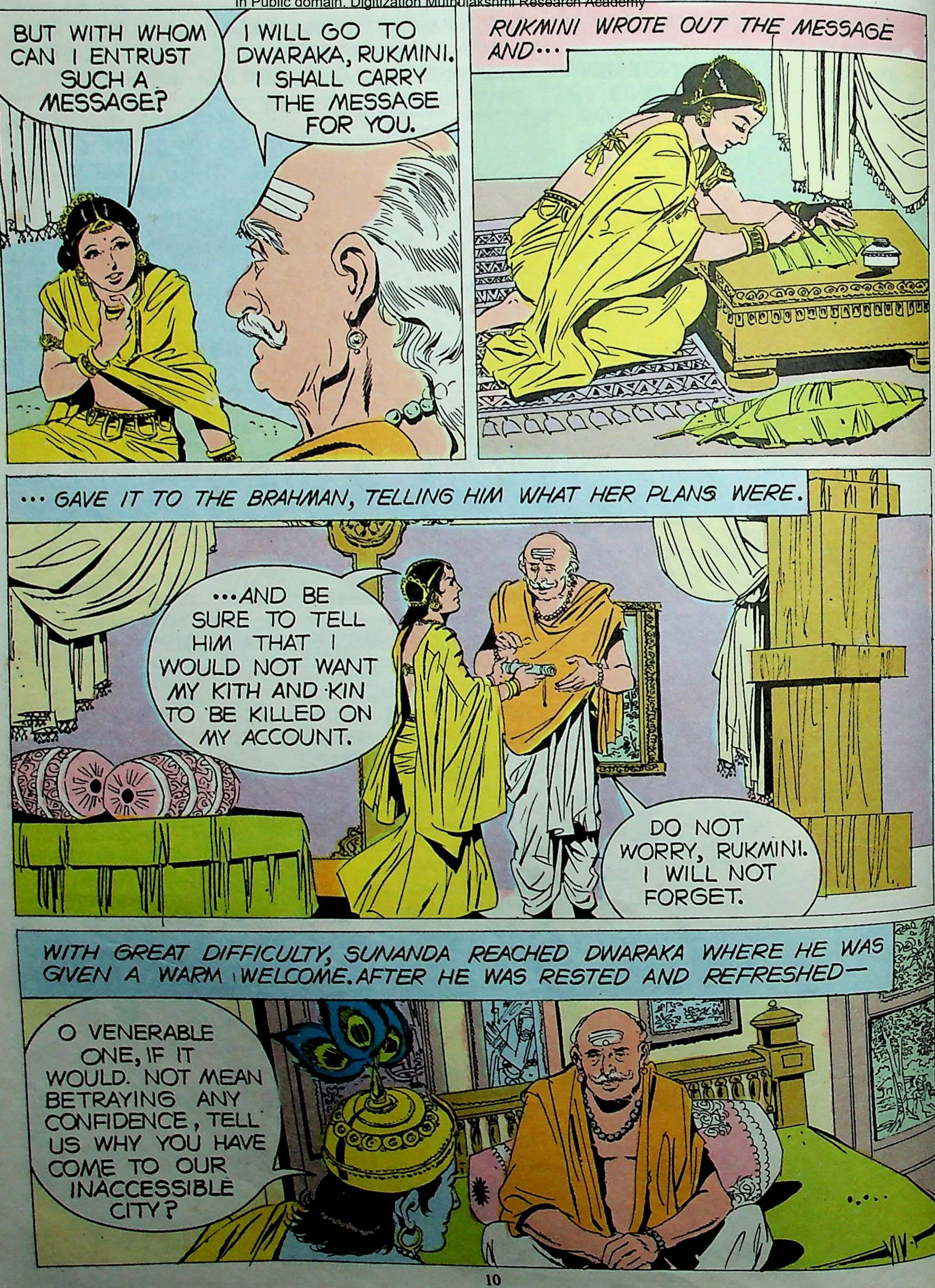

THEY WERE DISCUSSING HER MARRIAGE.
YOUR MOTHER AND I HAVE DECIDED TO GIVE HER TO KRISHNA.
HOW FORTUNATE AM I!


HOW COULD YOU, FATHER? DON'T FORGET, HE MURDERED MY DEAR FRIEND, THE EMPEROR'S SON-IN-LAW. SURELY, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DISPLEASE THE MIGHTY EMPEROR.
PLEASE RUKMI! DON'T MAKE HIM CHANGE HIS MIND!


BHEESHMAKA WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN—
BUT WE CANNOT THINK OF A MORE SUITABLE HUSBAND FOR HER. AFTER ALL JARASANDHA HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO AVENGE KAMSA'S DEATH...
BUT HE CERTAINLY WILL. IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.


THEN WHOM DO YOU SUGGEST?
THE EMPEROR'S FAVOURITE AND MY FRIEND— SHISHUPALA, THE CROWN PRINCE OF CHEDI. HE IS ENAMOURED OF RUKMINI.
THAT JACKAL! NEVER! I SHALL NEVER MARRY HIM. O RUKMI, HOW COULD YOU SELL YOUR OWN SISTER TO WIN THE EMPEROR'S FAVOUR? DON'T AGREE, FATHER, PLEASE DON'T AGREE!
BUT BHEESHMAKA INVARIABLY PERMITTED HIS ELDEST SON TO MAKE ALL MAJOR DECISIONS, EVEN IF THEY DID NOT COINCIDE WITH HIS OWN WISHES. HE HEAVED A SIGH.
ALL RIGHT, RUKMI. DO AS YOU WILL.
THEN I SHALL SEND A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO CHEDI AND INVITE SHISHUPALA TO COME AND MARRY RUKMINI.
THEY WALKED AWAY, LITTLE KNOWING THAT RUKMINI HAD OVERHEARD EVERY WORD OF THEIR CONVERSATION.
SO THEY DON'T EVEN PLAN TO HOLD A SWAYAMWARA. TO WHOM SHALL I SPEAK? WHAT SHALL I DO?


SUDDENLY AN IDEA OCCURRED TO HER.
WHY NOT! WHY SHOULDN'T I? AFTER ALL MY PARENTS ARE FOR IT.
SHE WENT INTO THE PALACE AND SENT FOR SUNANDA—A BRAHMAN WHOM SHE TRUSTED AND WHO WAS DEVOTED TO HER. WHEN HE CAME—
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PALE, MY LITTLE ONE? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
SHE TOLD HIM ABOUT THE CONVERSATION SHE HAD OVERHEARD. THEN—
O VENERABLE ONE, WOULD IT BE WRONG ON MY PART TO SEND A SECRET MESSAGE TO THE YADAVA HERO?
NO, LITTLE ONE, NEVER. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO MARRY SHISHUPALA WHEN YOUR HEART IS SET ON ANOTHER. AND YOUR PARENTS HAVE IN THEIR HEARTS APPROVED.


BUT WITH WHOM CAN I ENTRUST SUCH A MESSAGE?
I WILL GO TO DWARAKA, RUKMINI. I SHALL CARRY THE MESSAGE FOR YOU.
RUKMINI WROTE OUT THE MESSAGE AND...
... GAVE IT TO THE BRAHMAN, TELLING HIM WHAT HER PLANS WERE.
...AND BE SURE TO TELL HIM THAT I WOULD NOT WANT MY KITH AND KIN TO BE KILLED ON MY ACCOUNT.
DO NOT WORRY, RUKMINI. I WILL NOT FORGET.
WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY, SUNANDA REACHED DWARAKA WHERE HE WAS GIVEN A WARM WELCOME. AFTER HE WAS RESTED AND REFRESHED—
O VENERABLE ONE, IF IT WOULD. NOT MEAN BETRAYING ANY CONFIDENCE, TELL US WHY YOU HAVE COME TO OUR INACCESSIBLE CITY?
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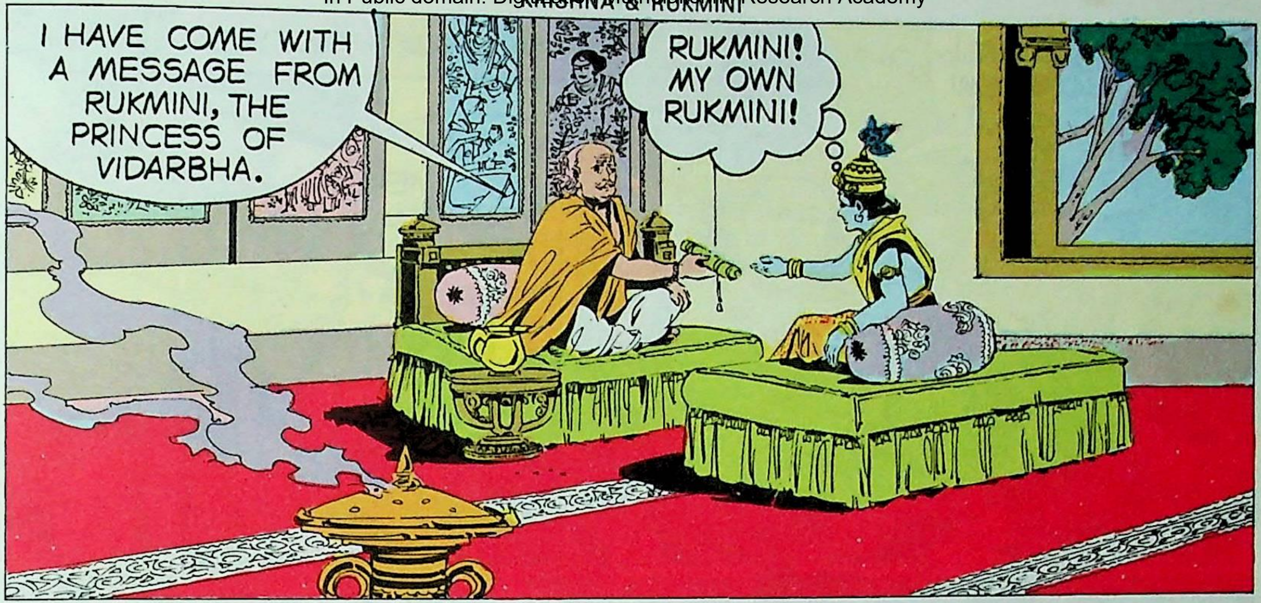
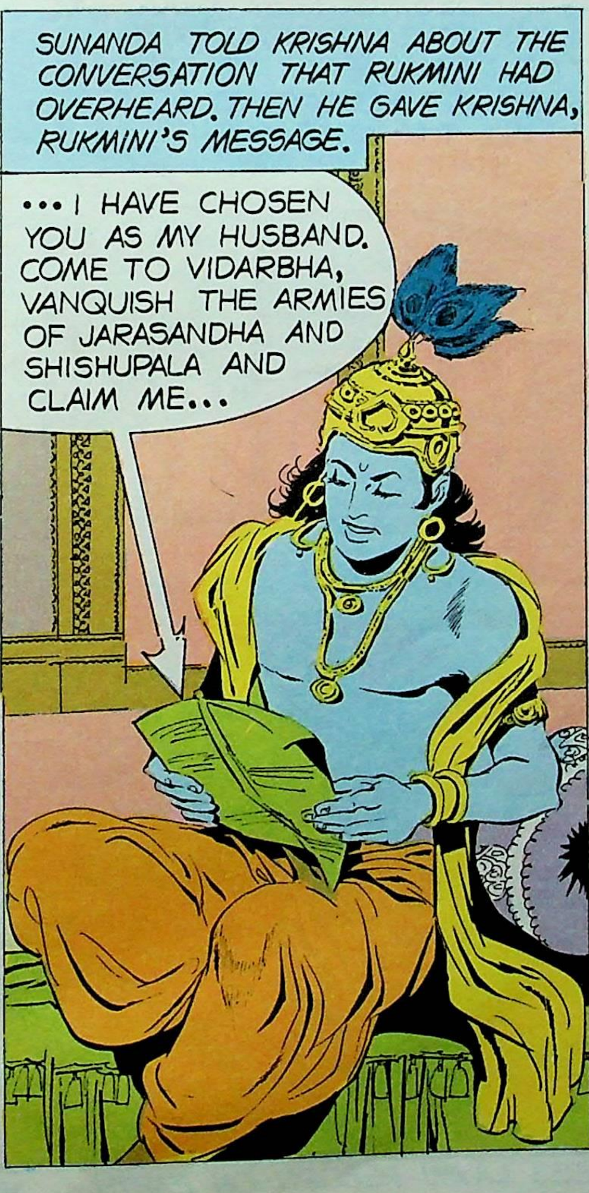
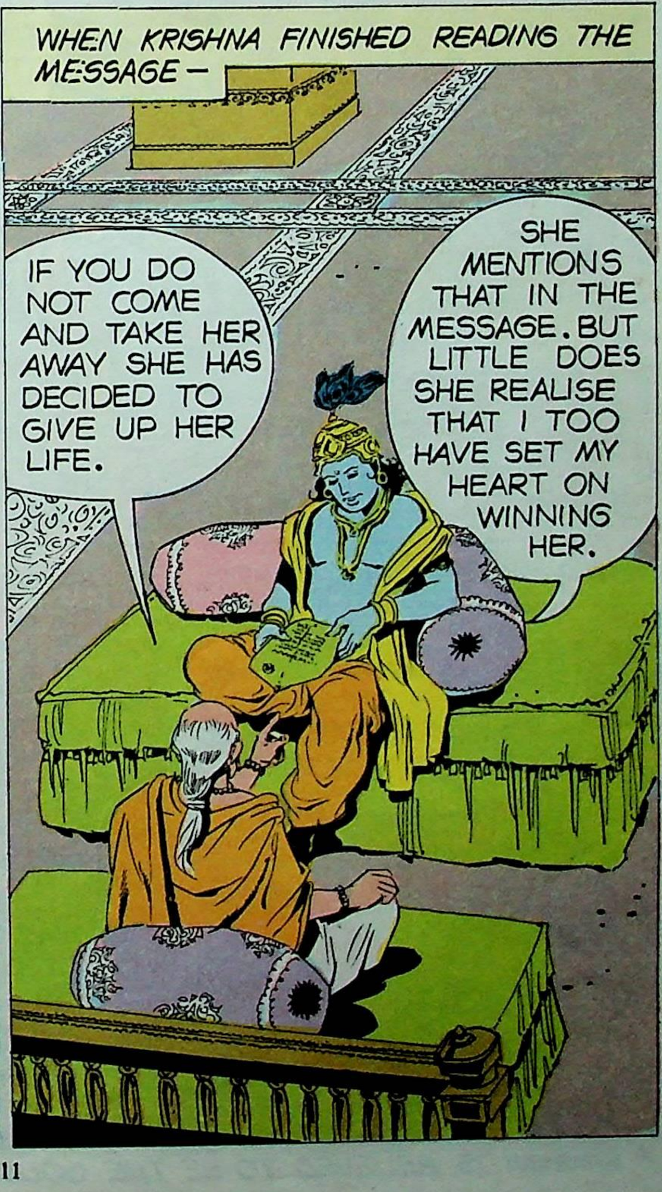
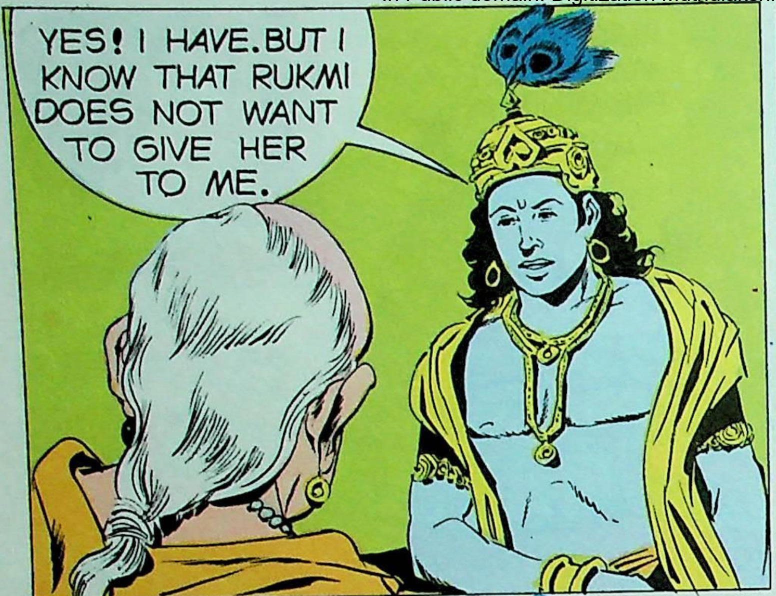

I HAVE COME WITH A MESSAGE FROM RUKMINI, THE PRINCESS OF VIDARBHA.
RUKMINI! MY OWN RUKMINI!

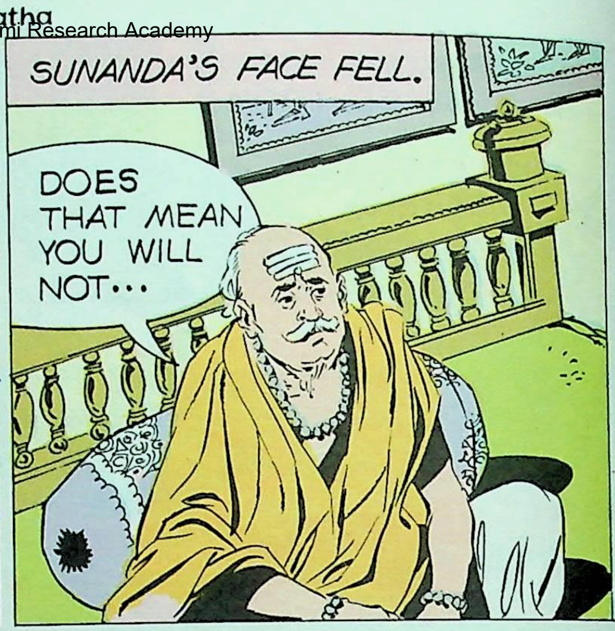
SUNANDA TOLD KRISHNA ABOUT THE CONVERSATION THAT RUKMINI HAD OVERHEARD. THEN HE GAVE KRISHNA, RUKMINI'S MESSAGE.

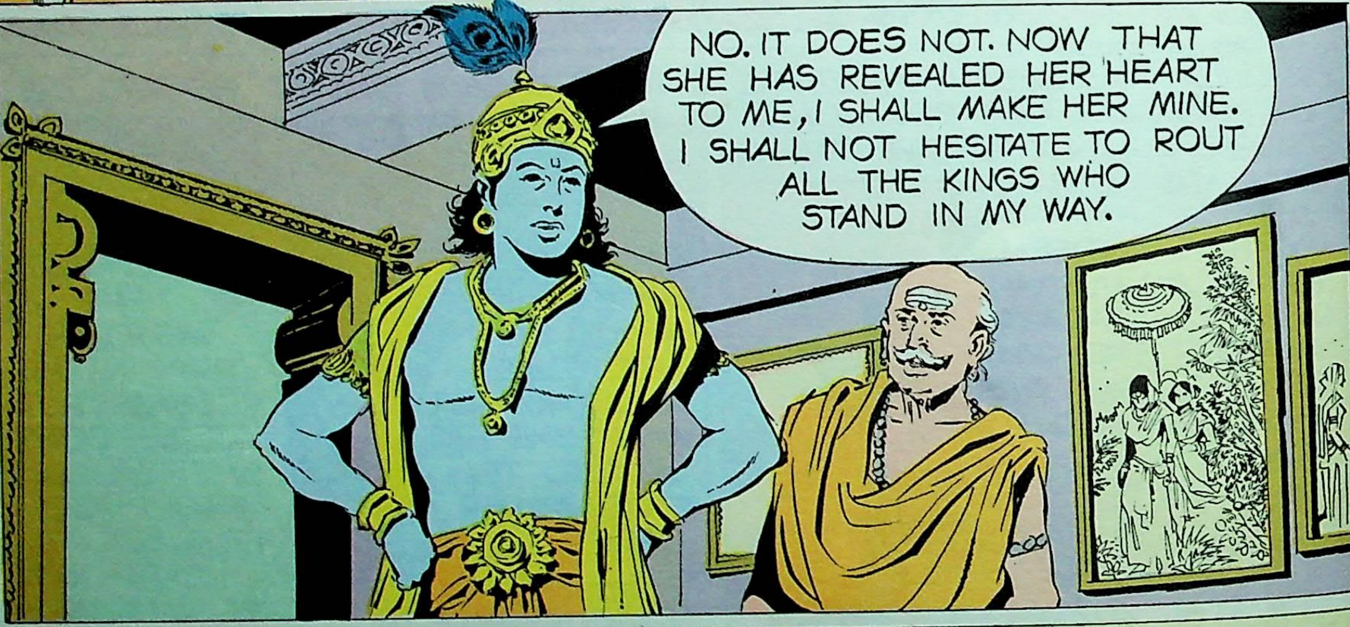

...I HAVE CHOSEN YOU AS MY HUSBAND. COME TO VIDARBHA, VANQUISH THE ARMIES OF JARASANDHA AND SHISHUPALA AND CLAIM ME...

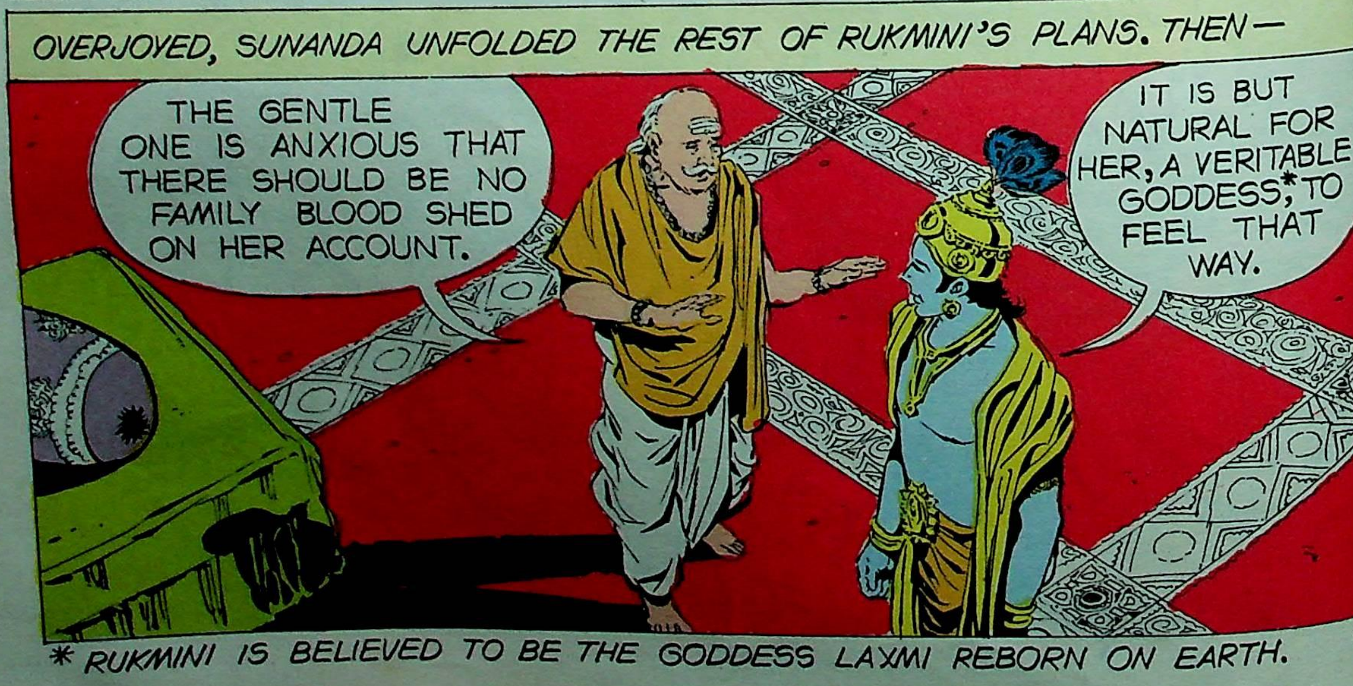
WHEN KRISHNA FINISHED READING THE MESSAGE –


IF YOU DO NOT COME AND TAKE HER AWAY SHE HAS DECIDED TO GIVE UP HER LIFE.
SHE MENTIONS THAT IN THE MESSAGE. BUT LITTLE DOES SHE REALISE THAT I TOO HAVE SET MY HEART ON WINNING HER.

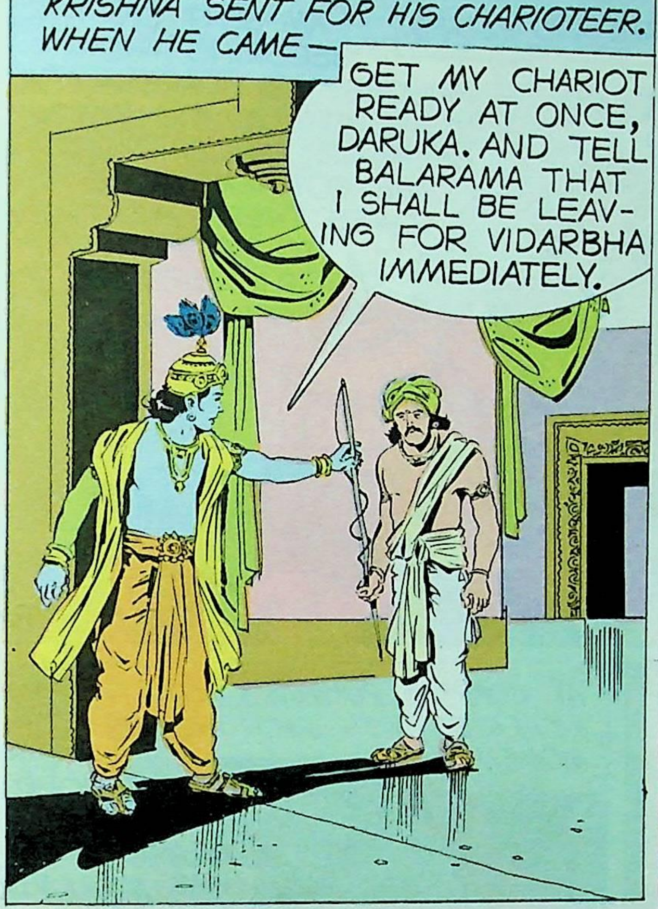

YES! I HAVE. BUT I KNOW THAT RUKMI DOES NOT WANT TO GIVE HER TO ME.

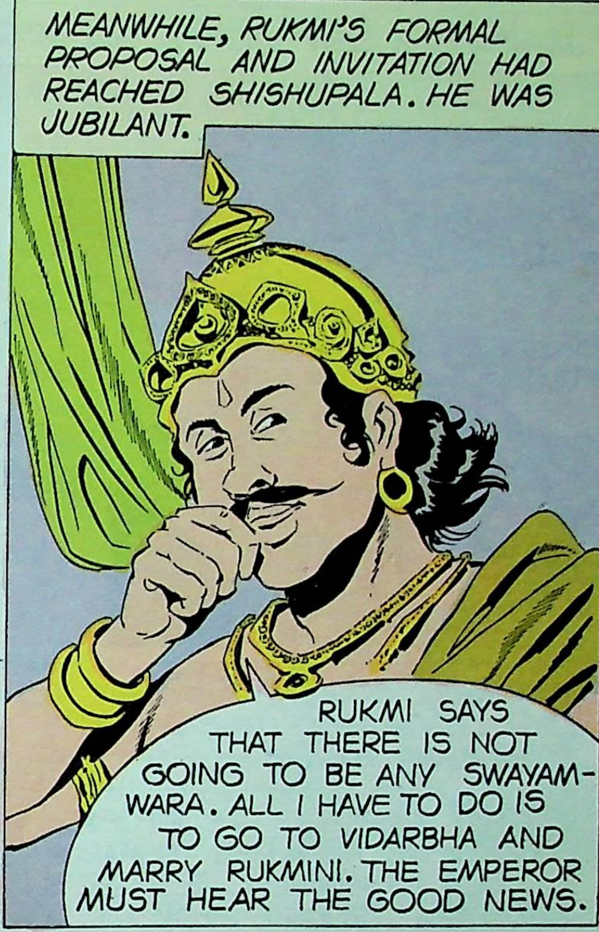

SUNANDA'S FACE FELL.
DOES THAT MEAN YOU WILL NOT...

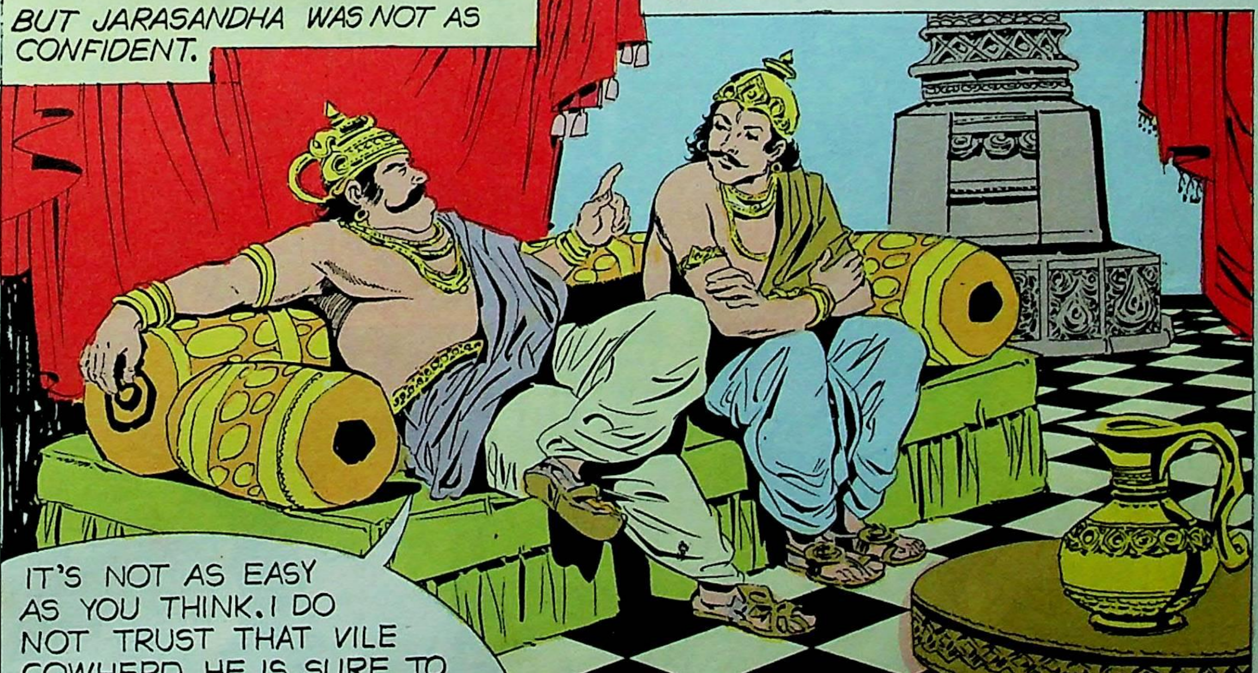

NO. IT DOES NOT. NOW THAT SHE HAS REVEALED HER HEART TO ME, I SHALL MAKE HER MINE. I SHALL NOT HESITATE TO ROUT ALL THE KINGS WHO STAND IN MY WAY.

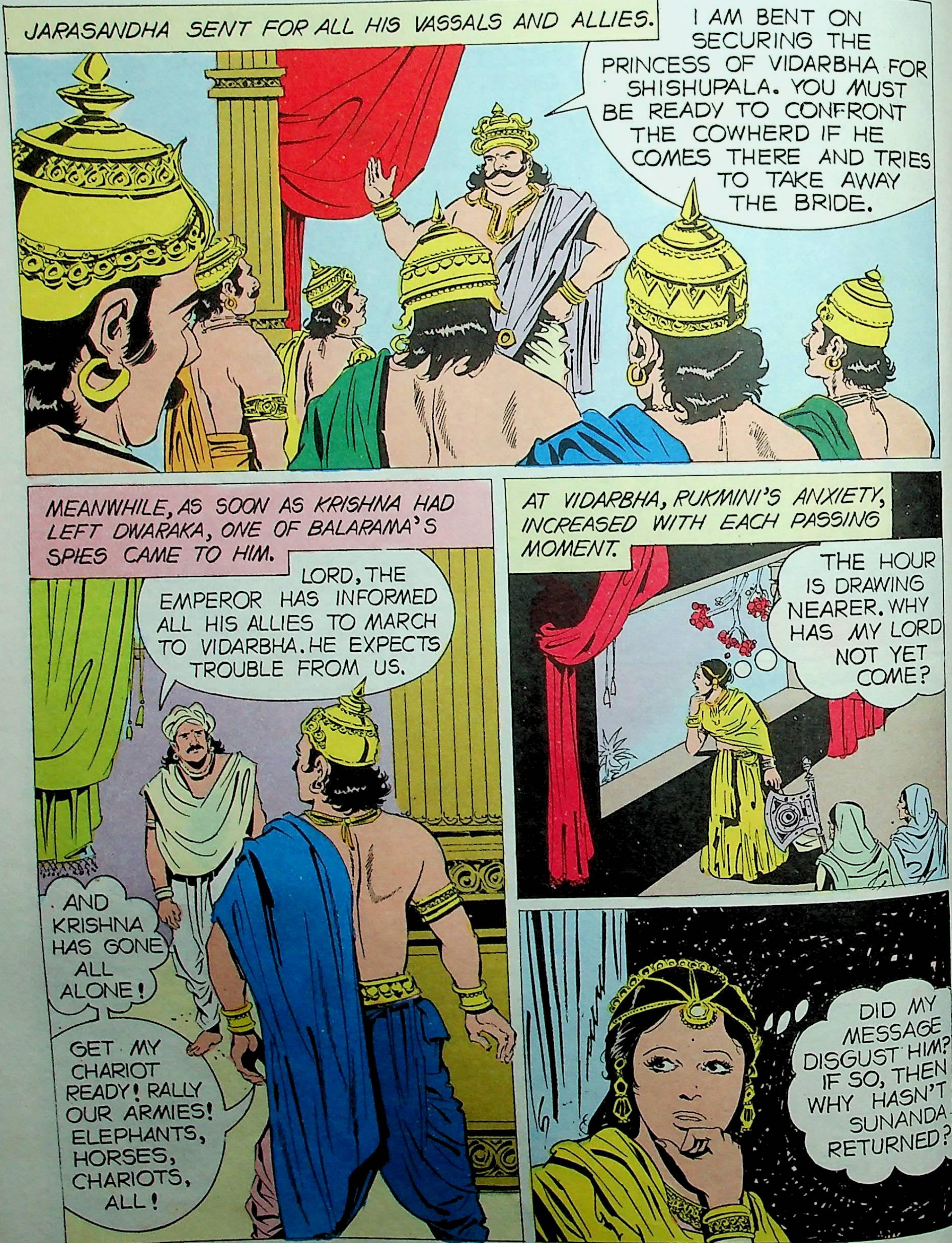

OVERJOYED, SUNANDA UNFOLDED THE REST OF RUKMINI'S PLANS. THEN—
THE GENTLE ONE IS ANXIOUS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO FAMILY BLOOD SHED ON HER ACCOUNT.
IT IS BUT NATURAL FOR HER, A VERITABLE GODDESS,* TO FEEL THAT WAY.

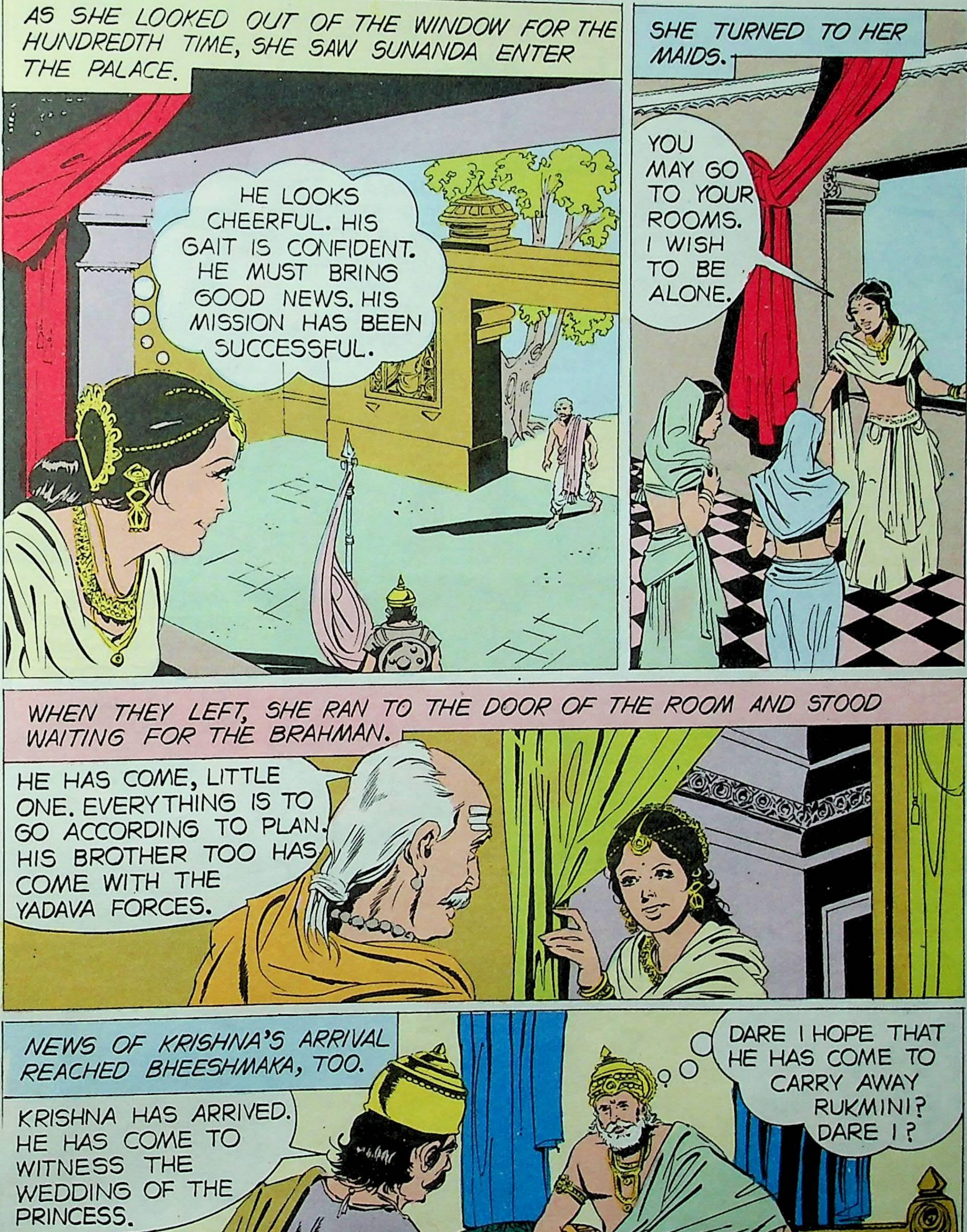
* RUKMINI IS BELIEVED TO BE THE GODDESS LAXMI REBORN ON EARTH.

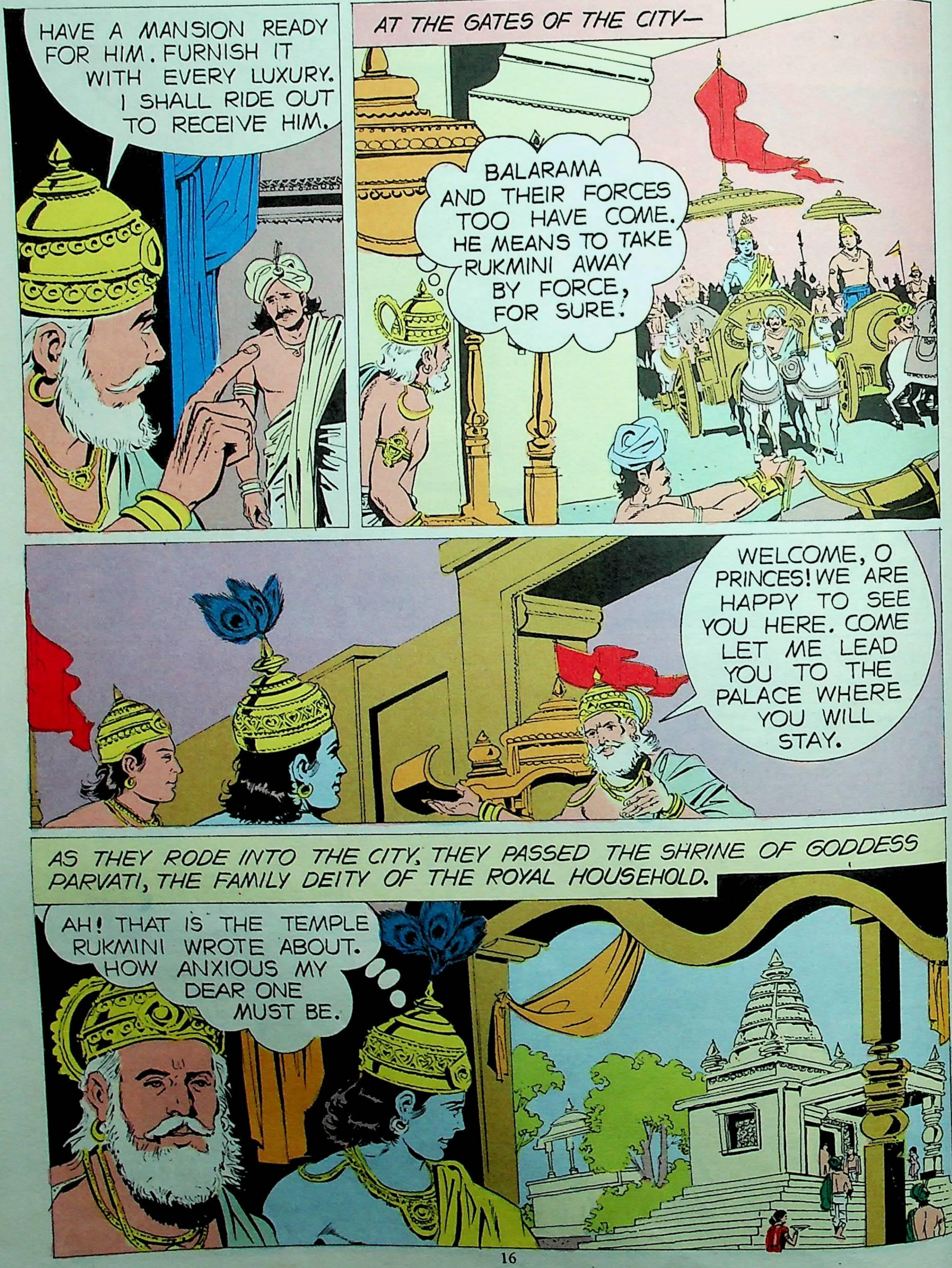

KRISHNA SENT FOR HIS CHARIOTEER. WHEN HE CAME—
GET MY CHARIOT READY AT ONCE, DARUKA. AND TELL BALARAMA THAT I SHALL BE LEAVING FOR VIDARBHA IMMEDIATELY.

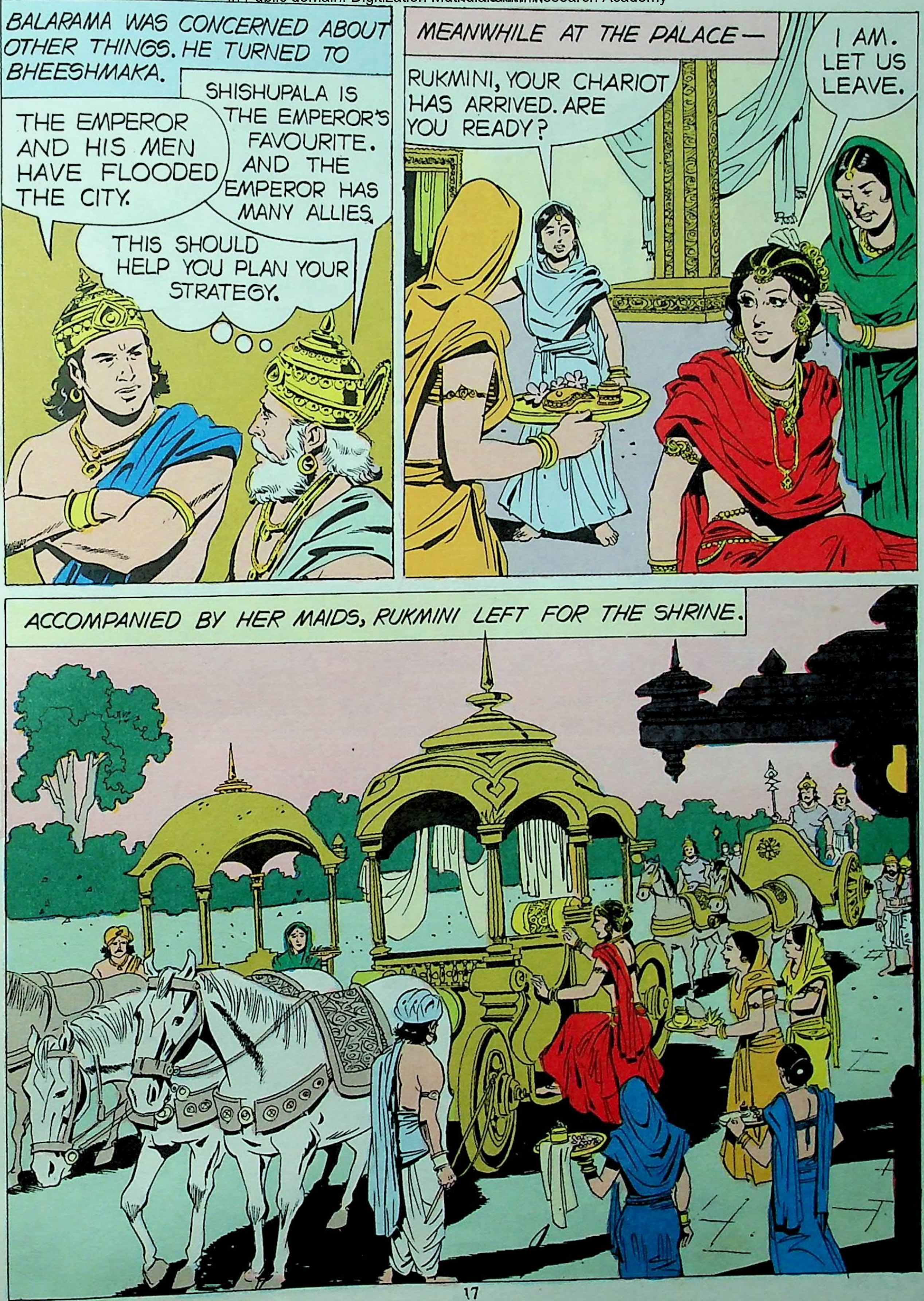

MEANWHILE, RUKMI'S FORMAL PROPOSAL AND INVITATION HAD REACHED SHISHUPALA. HE WAS JUBILANT.
RUKMI SAYS THAT THERE IS NOT GOING TO BE ANY SWAYAMWARA. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TO GO TO VIDARBHA AND MARRY RUKMINI. THE EMPEROR MUST HEAR THE GOOD NEWS.


BUT JARASANDHA WAS NOT AS CONFIDENT.
IT'S NOT AS EASY AS YOU THINK. I DO NOT TRUST THAT VILE COWHERD. HE IS SURE TO HEAR OF THE NEWS AND SNATCH THE BRIDE AWAY. WE WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED.

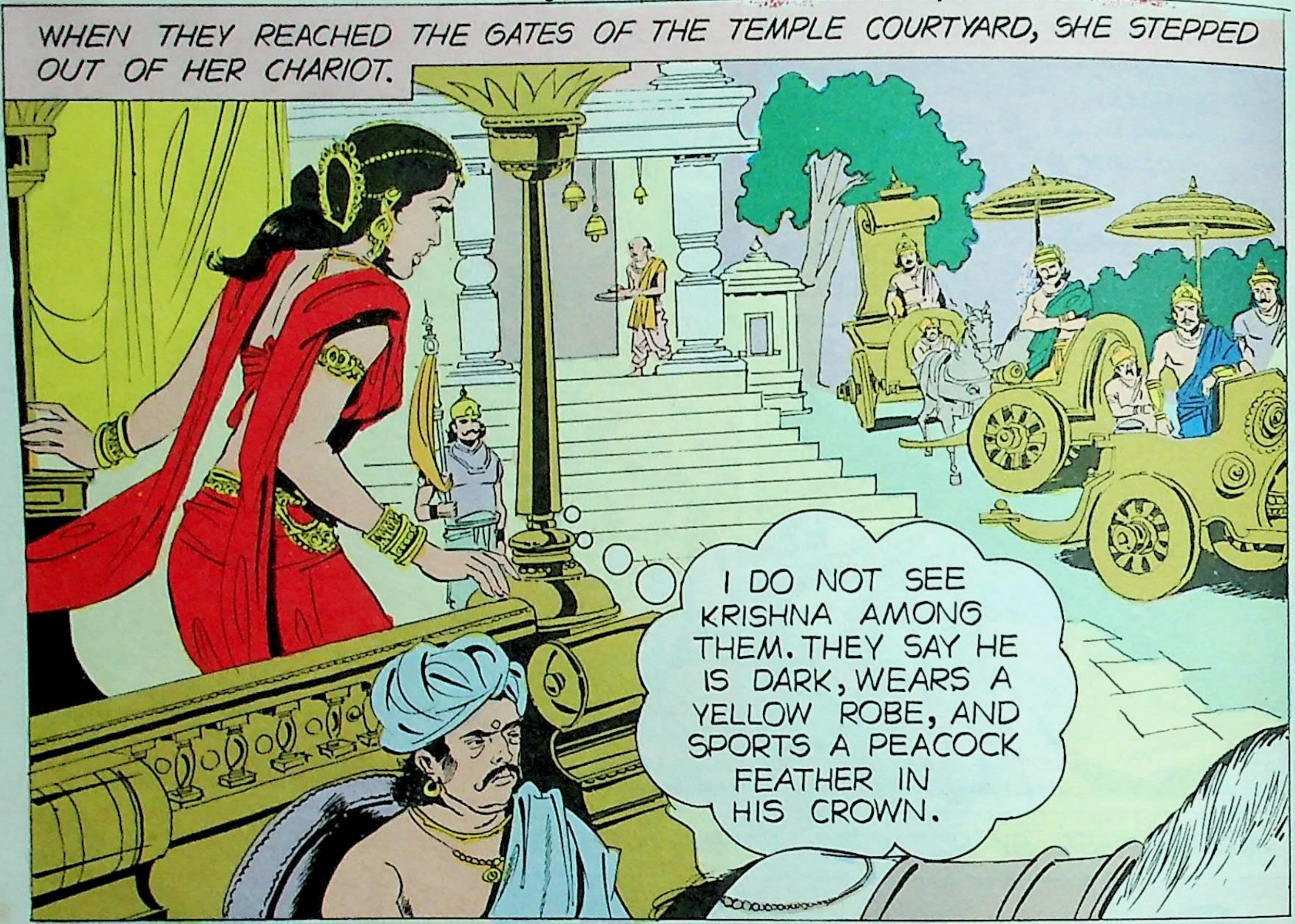

JARASANDHA SENT FOR ALL HIS VASSALS AND ALLIES.
I AM BENT ON SECURING THE PRINCESS OF VIDARBHA FOR SHISHUPALA. YOU MUST BE READY TO CONFRONT THE COWHERD IF HE COMES THERE AND TRIES TO TAKE AWAY THE BRIDE.
MEANWHILE, AS SOON AS KRISHNA HAD LEFT DWARAKA, ONE OF BALARAMA'S SPIES CAME TO HIM.
LORD, THE EMPEROR HAS INFORMED ALL HIS ALLIES TO MARCH TO VIDARBHA. HE EXPECTS TROUBLE FROM US.
AND KRISHNA HAS GONE ALL ALONE!
GET MY CHARIOT READY! RALLY OUR ARMIES! ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS, ALL!
AT VIDARBHA, RUKMINI'S ANXIETY, INCREASED WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.
THE HOUR IS DRAWING NEARER. WHY HAS MY LORD NOT YET COME?
DID MY MESSAGE DISGUST HIM? IF SO, THEN WHY HASN'T SUNANDA RETURNED?


AS SHE LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME, SHE SAW SUNANDA ENTER THE PALACE.
HE LOOKS CHEERFUL. HIS GAIT IS CONFIDENT. HE MUST BRING GOOD NEWS. HIS MISSION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL.
SHE TURNED TO HER MAIDS.
YOU MAY GO TO YOUR ROOMS. I WISH TO BE ALONE.
WHEN THEY LEFT, SHE RAN TO THE DOOR OF THE ROOM AND STOOD WAITING FOR THE BRAHMAN.
HE HAS COME, LITTLE ONE. EVERYTHING IS TO GO ACCORDING TO PLAN. HIS BROTHER TOO HAS COME WITH THE YADAVA FORCES.
NEWS OF KRISHNA'S ARRIVAL REACHED BHEESHMAKA, TOO.
KRISHNA HAS ARRIVED. HE HAS COME TO WITNESS THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCESS.
DARE I HOPE THAT HE HAS COME TO CARRY AWAY RUKMINI? DARE I?

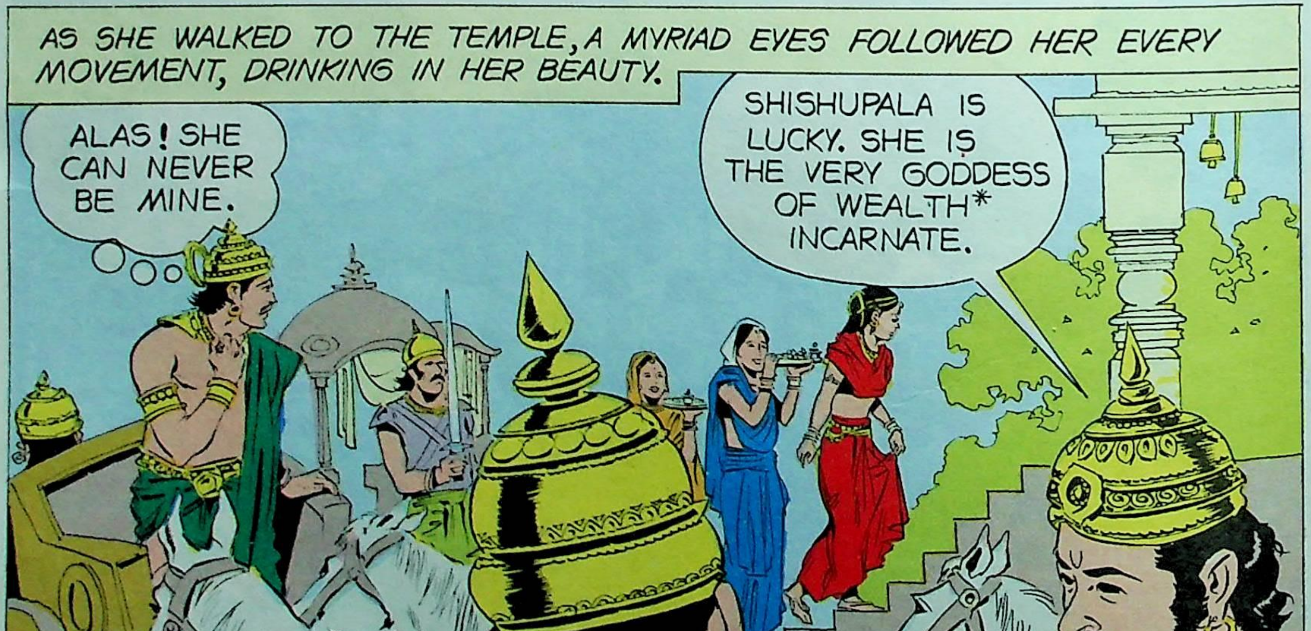

HAVE A MANSION READY FOR HIM. FURNISH IT WITH EVERY LUXURY. I SHALL RIDE OUT TO RECEIVE HIM.
AT THE GATES OF THE CITY—
BALARAMA AND THEIR FORCES TOO HAVE COME. HE MEANS TO TAKE RUKMINI AWAY BY FORCE, FOR SURE!
WELCOME, O PRINCES! WE ARE HAPPY TO SEE YOU HERE. COME LET ME LEAD YOU TO THE PALACE WHERE YOU WILL STAY.
AS THEY RODE INTO THE CITY, THEY PASSED THE SHRINE OF GODDESS PARVATI, THE FAMILY DEITY OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD.
AH! THAT IS THE TEMPLE RUKMINI WROTE ABOUT. HOW ANXIOUS MY DEAR ONE MUST BE.


BALARAMA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT OTHER THINGS. HE TURNED TO BHEESHMAKA.
THE EMPEROR AND HIS MEN HAVE FLOODED THE CITY.
SHISHUPALA IS THE EMPEROR'S FAVOURITE. AND THE EMPEROR HAS MANY ALLIES.
THIS SHOULD HELP YOU PLAN YOUR STRATEGY.
MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE —
RUKMINI, YOUR CHARIOT HAS ARRIVED. ARE YOU READY?
I AM. LET US LEAVE.
ACCOMPANIED BY HER MAIDS, RUKMINI LEFT FOR THE SHRINE.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE GATES OF THE TEMPLE COURTYARD, SHE STEPPED OUT OF HER CHARIOT.


I DO NOT SEE KRISHNA AMONG THEM. THEY SAY HE IS DARK, WEARS A YELLOW ROBE, AND SPORTS A PEACOCK FEATHER IN HIS CROWN.

AS SHE WALKED TO THE TEMPLE, A MYRIAD EYES FOLLOWED HER EVERY MOVEMENT, DRINKING IN HER BEAUTY.


ALAS! SHE CAN NEVER BE MINE.
SHISHUPALA IS LUCKY. SHE IS THE VERY GODDESS OF WEALTH* INCARNATE.

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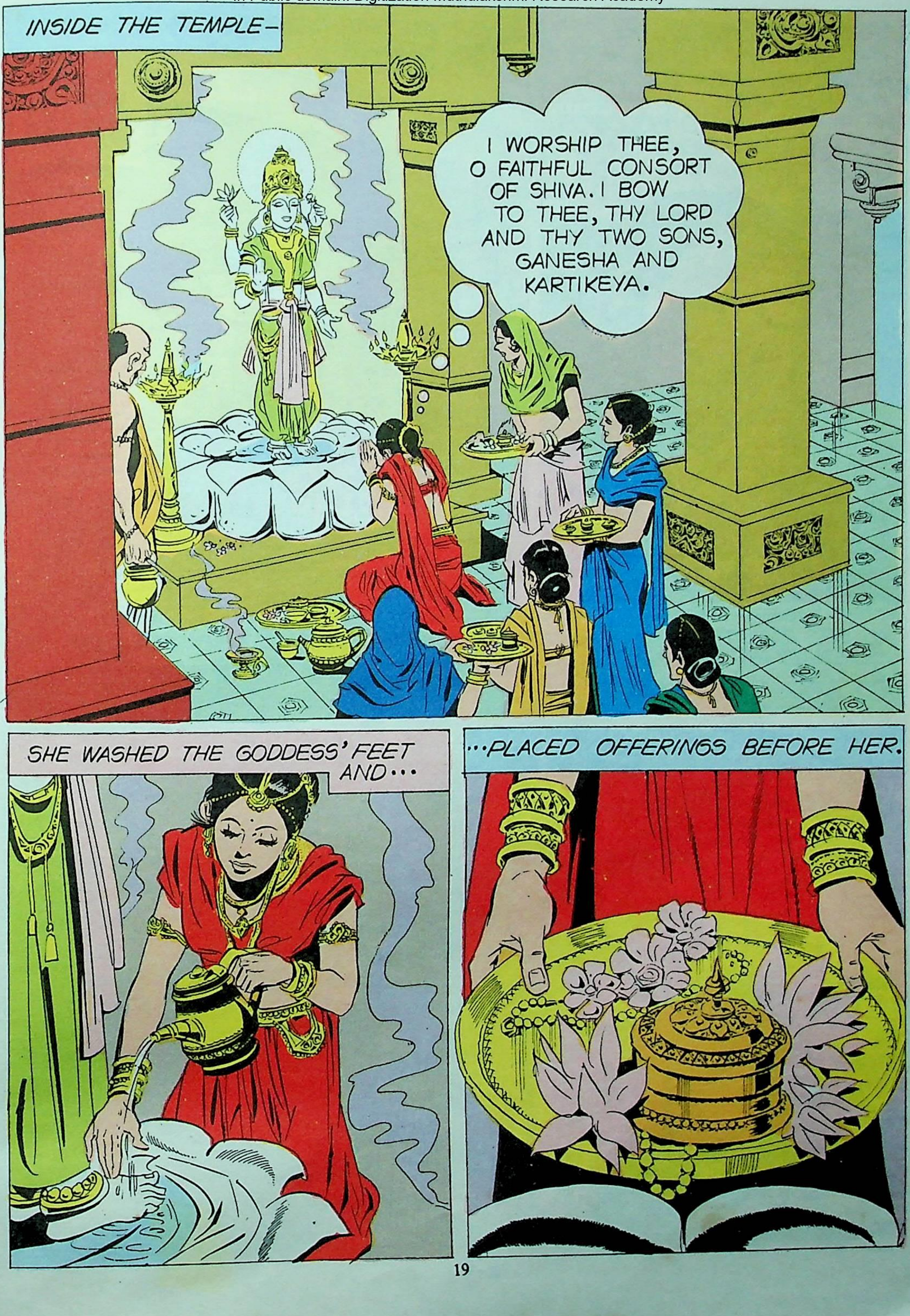
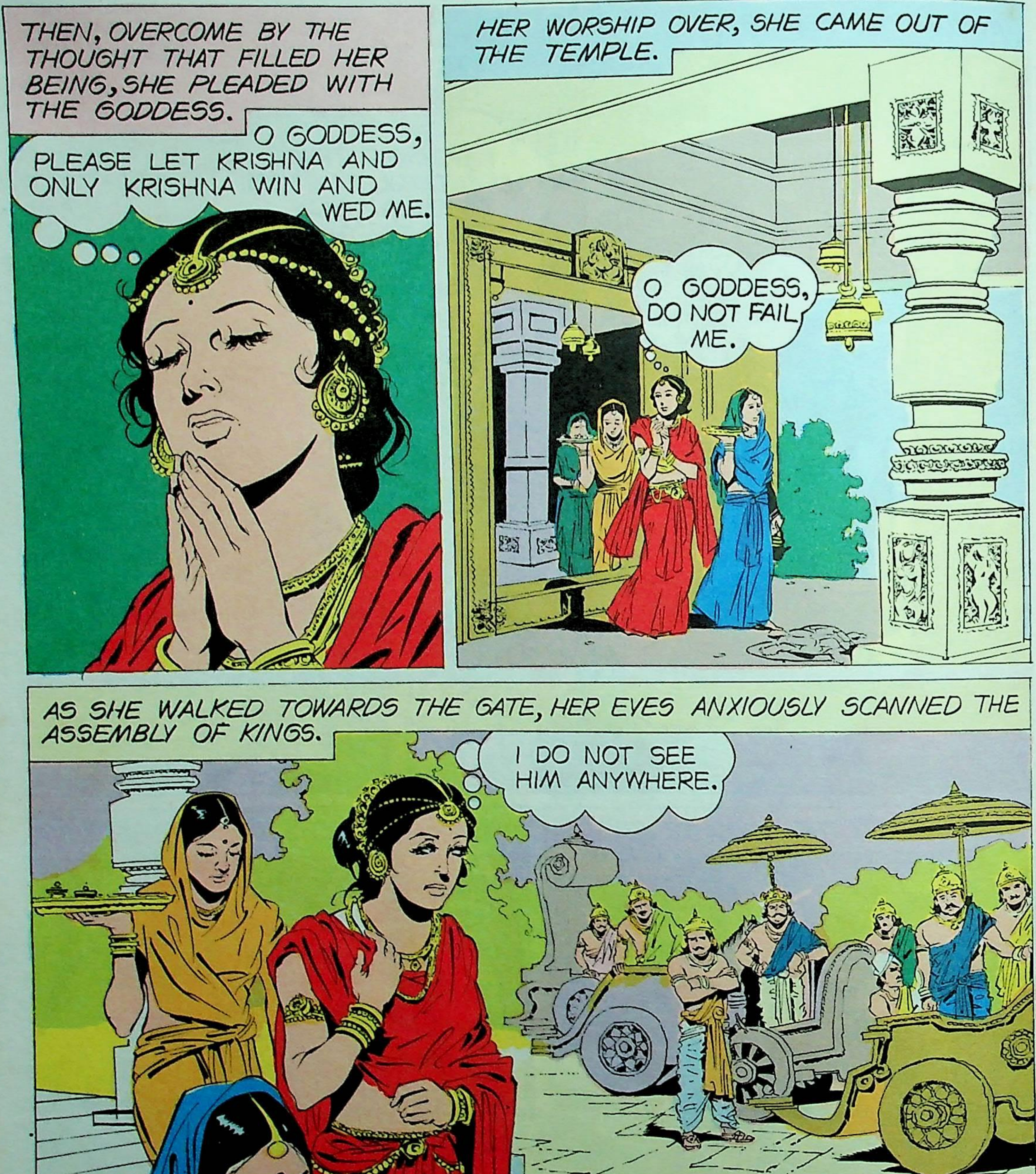
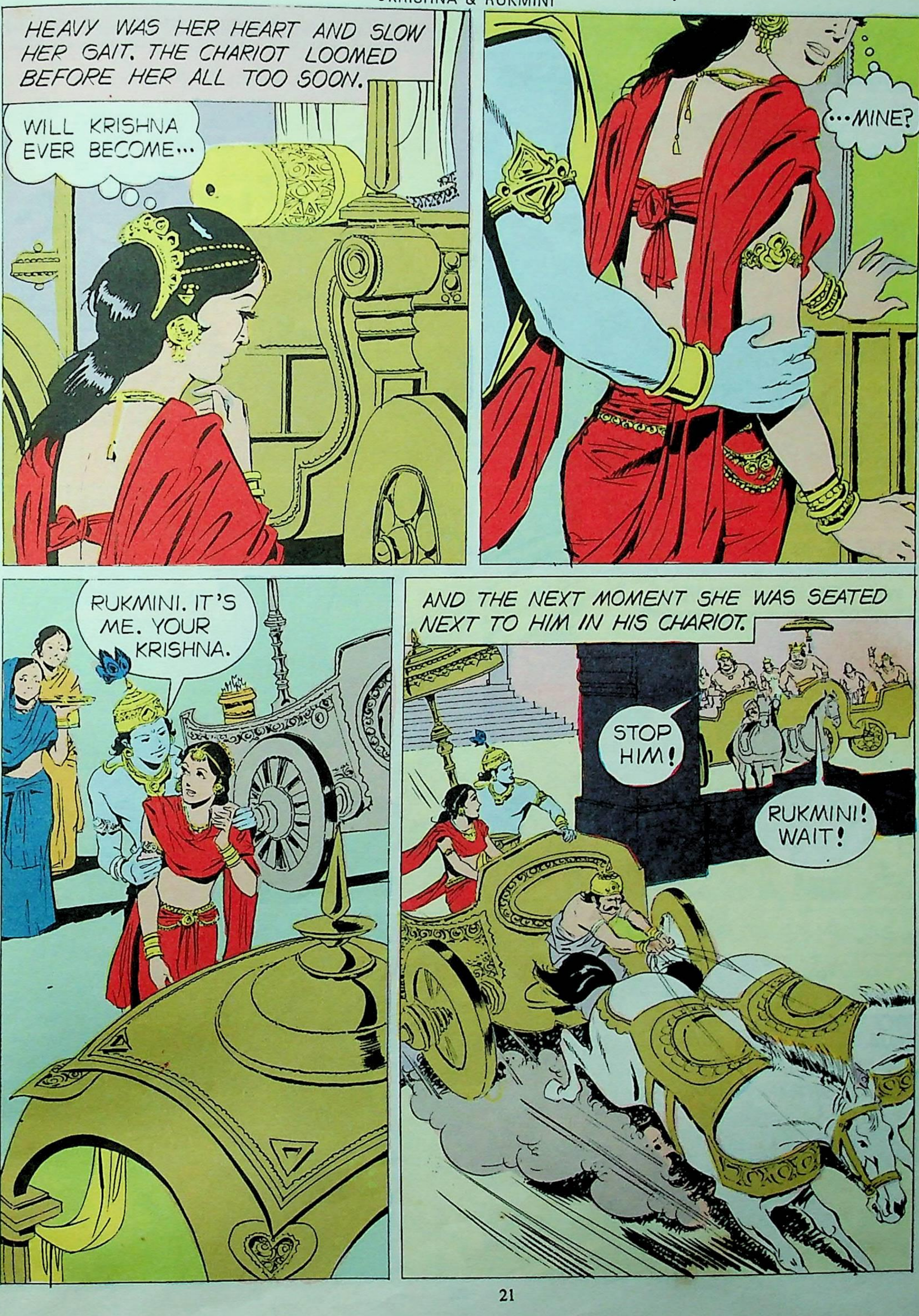
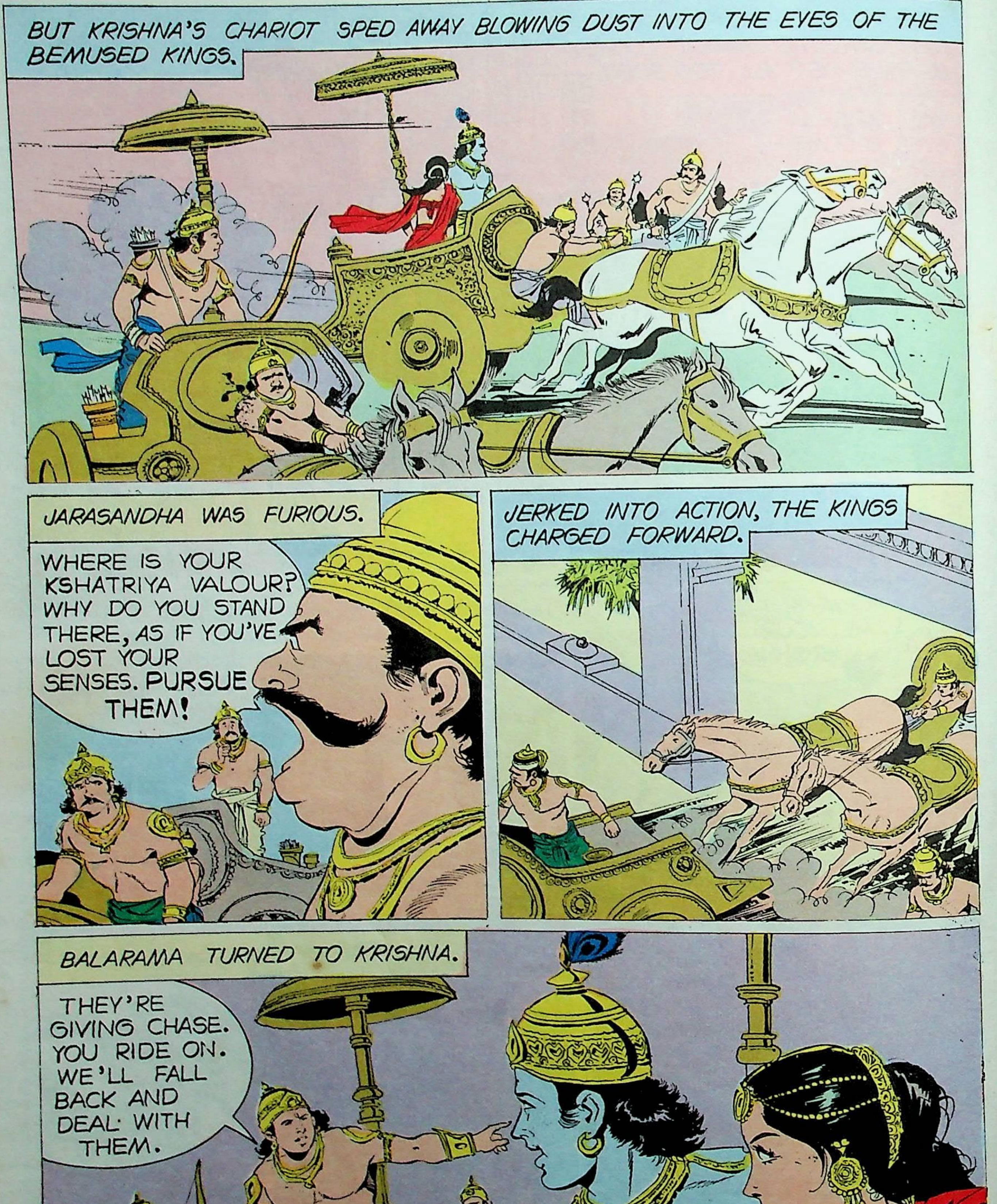
* LAXMI


INSIDE THE TEMPLE–
I WORSHIP THEE, O FAITHFUL CONSORT OF SHIVA. I BOW TO THEE, THY LORD AND THY TWO SONS, GANESHA AND KARTIKEYA.
SHE WASHED THE GODDESS' FEET AND...
...PLACED OFFERINGS BEFORE HER.


THEN, OVERCOME BY THE THOUGHT THAT FILLED HER BEING, SHE PLEADED WITH THE GODDESS.
O GODDESS, PLEASE LET KRISHNA AND ONLY KRISHNA WIN AND WED ME.
HER WORSHIP OVER, SHE CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE.
O GODDESS, DO NOT FAIL ME.
AS SHE WALKED TOWARDS THE GATE, HER EYES ANXIOUSLY SCANNED THE ASSEMBLY OF KINGS.
I DO NOT SEE HIM ANYWHERE.


HEAVY WAS HER HEART AND SLOW HER GAIT. THE CHARIOT LOOMED BEFORE HER ALL TOO SOON.
WILL KRISHNA EVER BECOME...
...MINE?
RUKMINI. IT'S ME. YOUR KRISHNA.
AND THE NEXT MOMENT SHE WAS SEATED NEXT TO HIM IN HIS CHARIOT.
STOP HIM!
RUKMINI! WAIT!


BUT KRISHNA'S CHARIOT SPED AWAY BLOWING DUST INTO THE EYES OF THE BEMUSED KINGS.
JARASANDHA WAS FURIOUS.
WHERE IS YOUR KSHATRIYA VALOUR? WHY DO YOU STAND THERE, AS IF YOU'VE LOST YOUR SENSES. PURSUE THEM!
JERKED INTO ACTION, THE KINGS CHARGED FORWARD.
BALARAMA TURNED TO KRISHNA.
THEY'RE GIVING CHASE. YOU RIDE ON. WE'LL FALL BACK AND DEAL WITH THEM.

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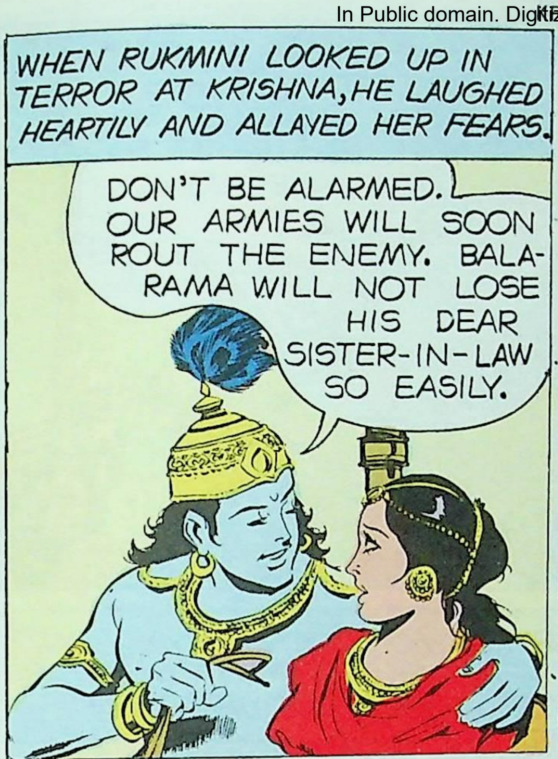
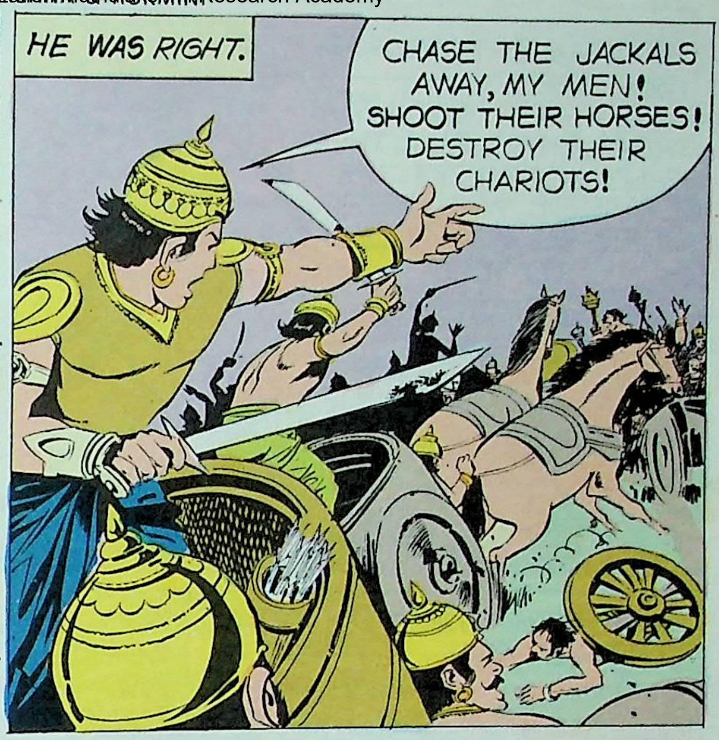
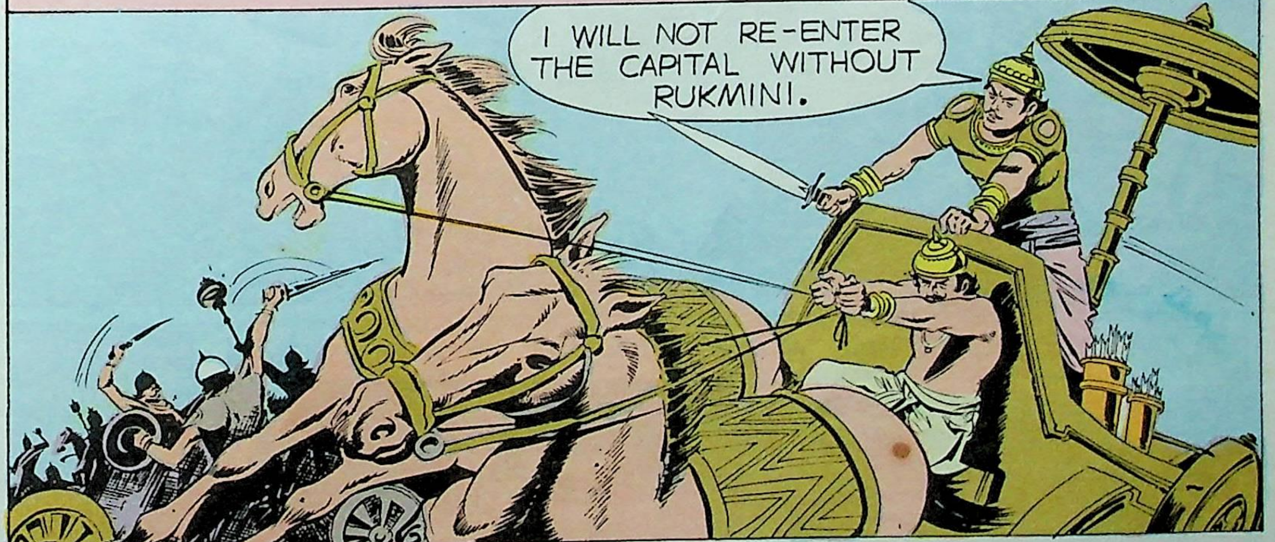
WHEN RUKMINI LOOKED UP IN TERROR AT KRISHNA, HE LAUGHED HEARTILY AND ALLAYED HER FEARS.


DON'T BE ALARMED. OUR ARMIES WILL SOON ROUT THE ENEMY. BALARAMA WILL NOT LOSE HIS DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW SO EASILY.

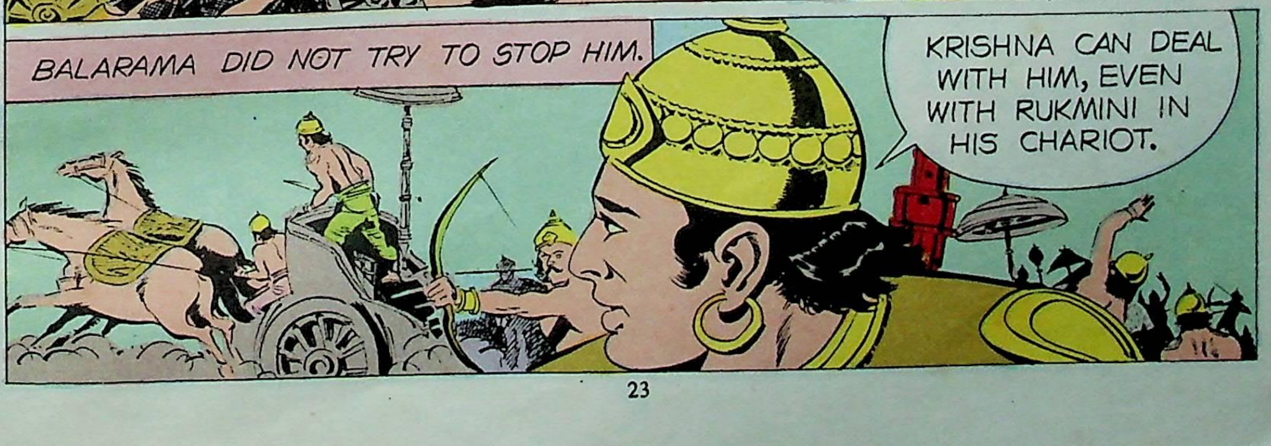
HE WAS RIGHT.

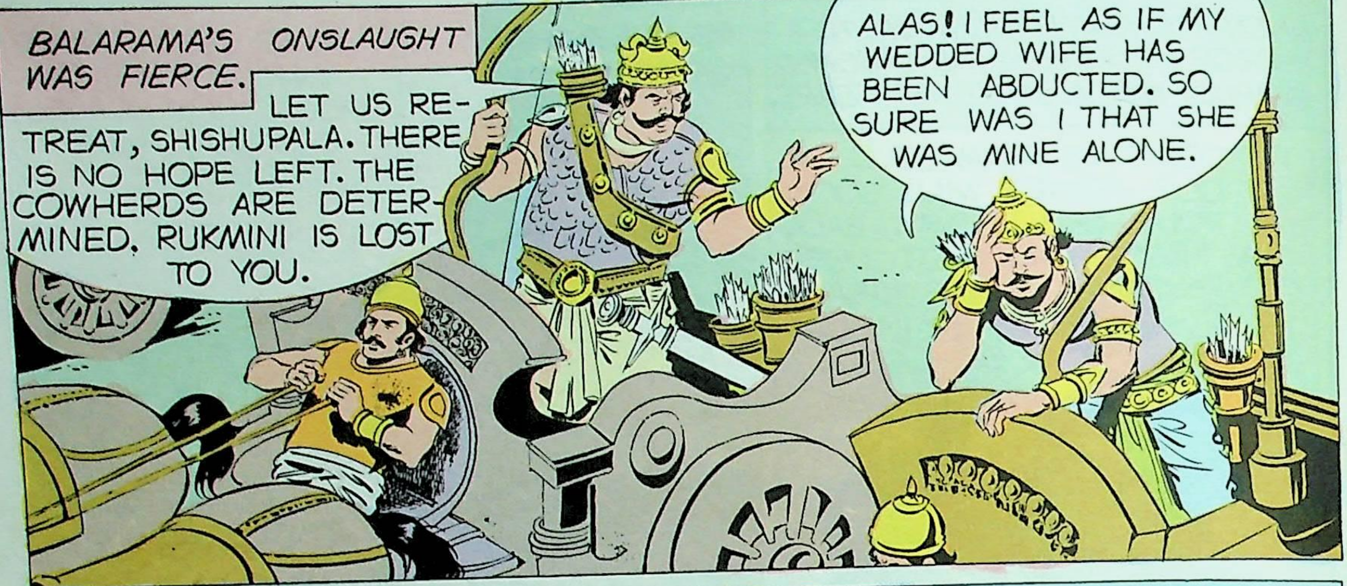

CHASE THE JACKALS AWAY, MY MEN! SHOOT THEIR HORSES! DESTROY THEIR CHARIOTS!

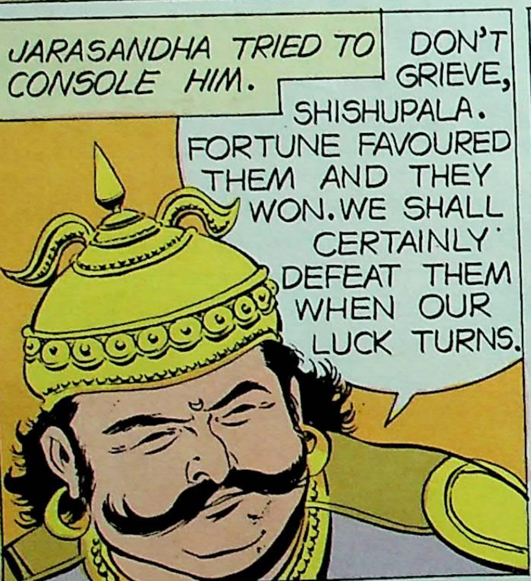
WHILE BALARAMA WAS BUSY TACKLING JARASANDHA, SHISHUPALA AND THEIR HORDES, RUKMI CHARGED AHEAD AFTER KRISHNA'S VANISHING CHARIOT.

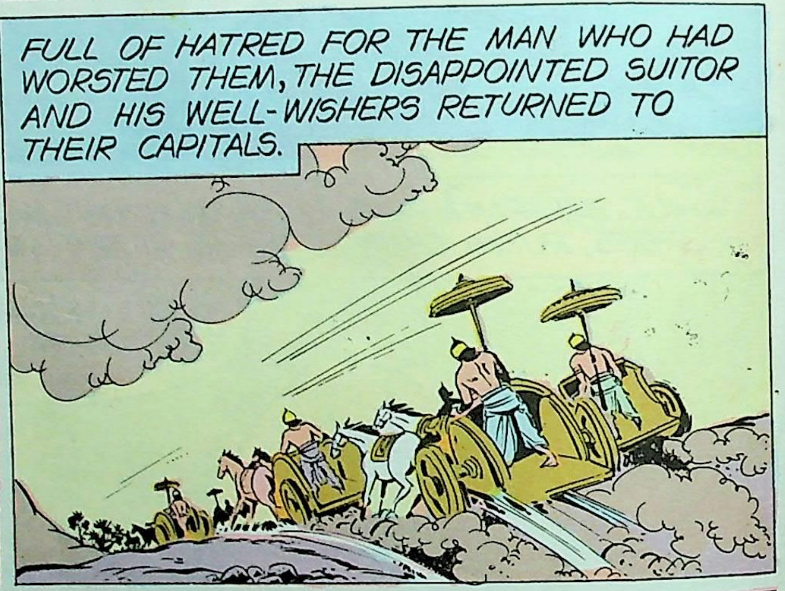

I WILL NOT RE-ENTER THE CAPITAL WITHOUT RUKMINI.

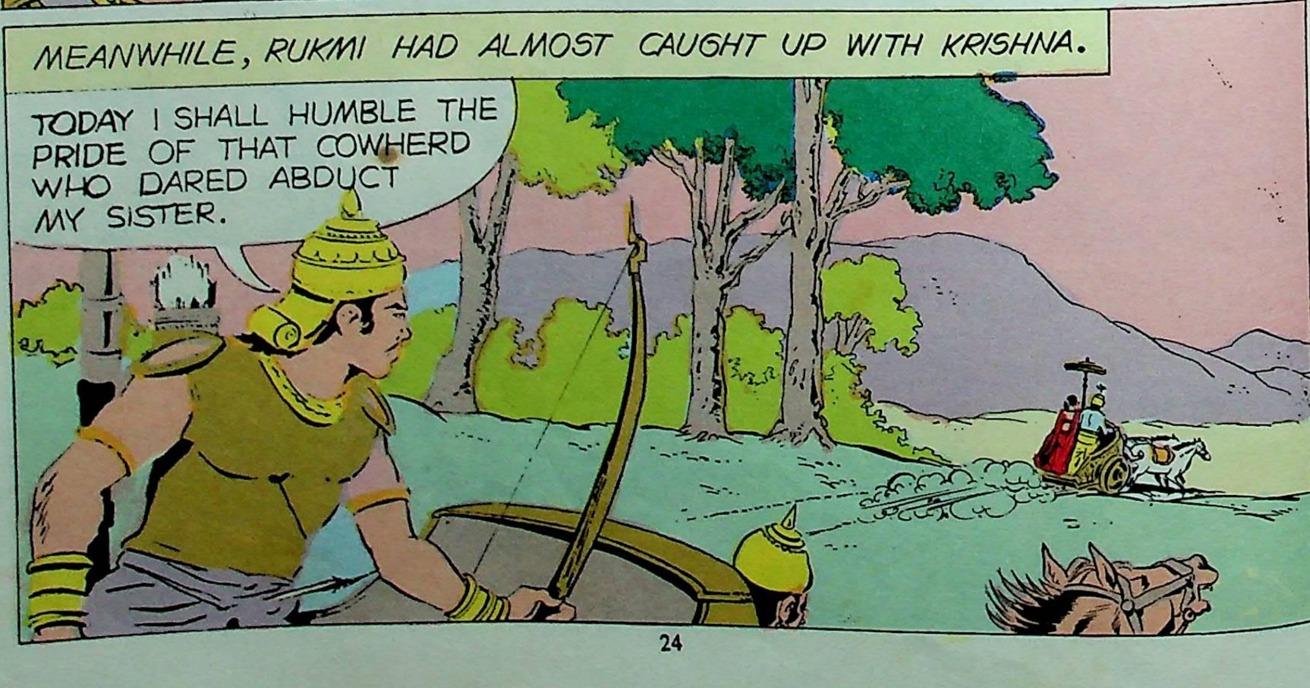
BALARAMA DID NOT TRY TO STOP HIM.

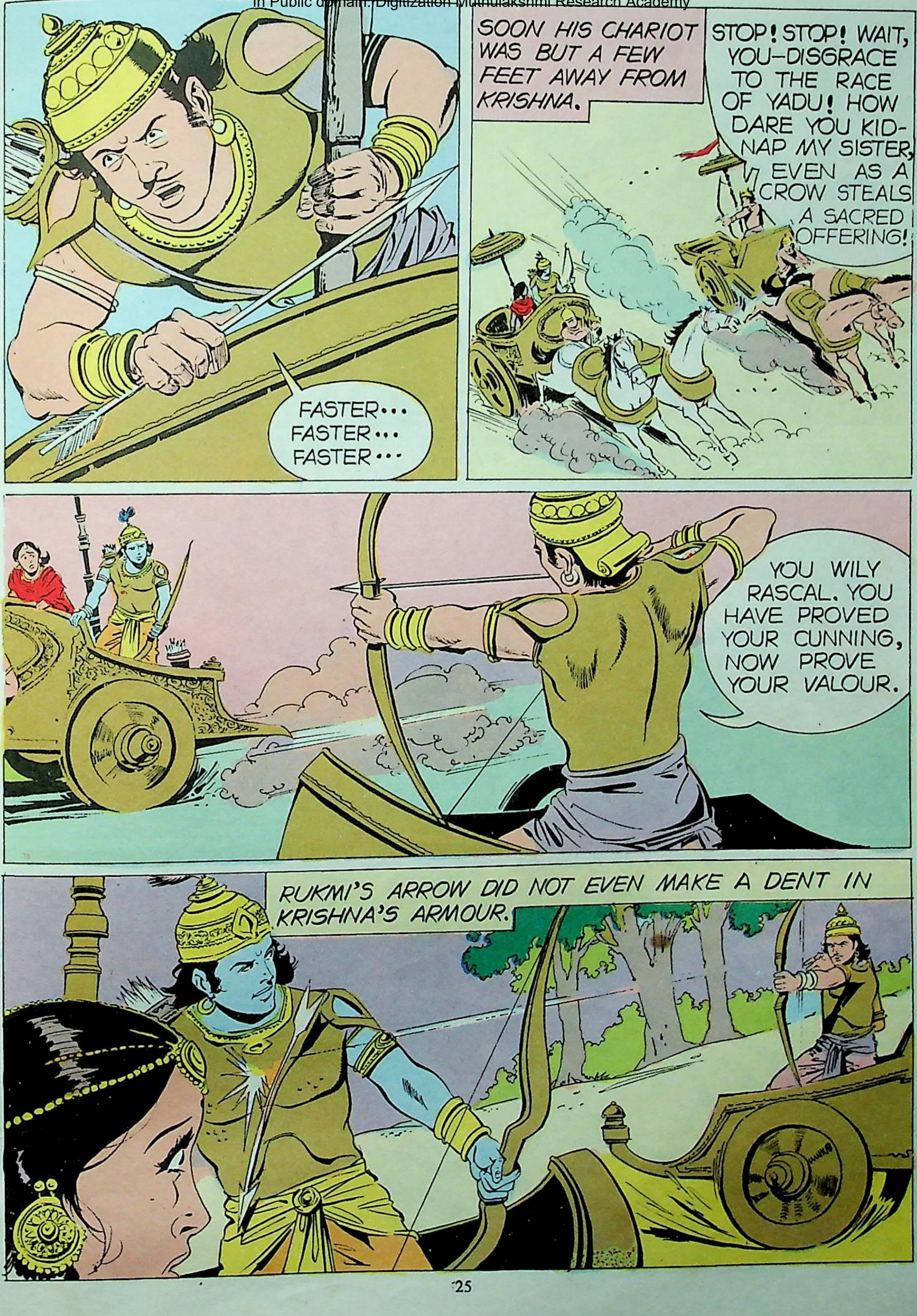

KRISHNA CAN DEAL WITH HIM, EVEN WITH RUKMINI IN HIS CHARIOT.

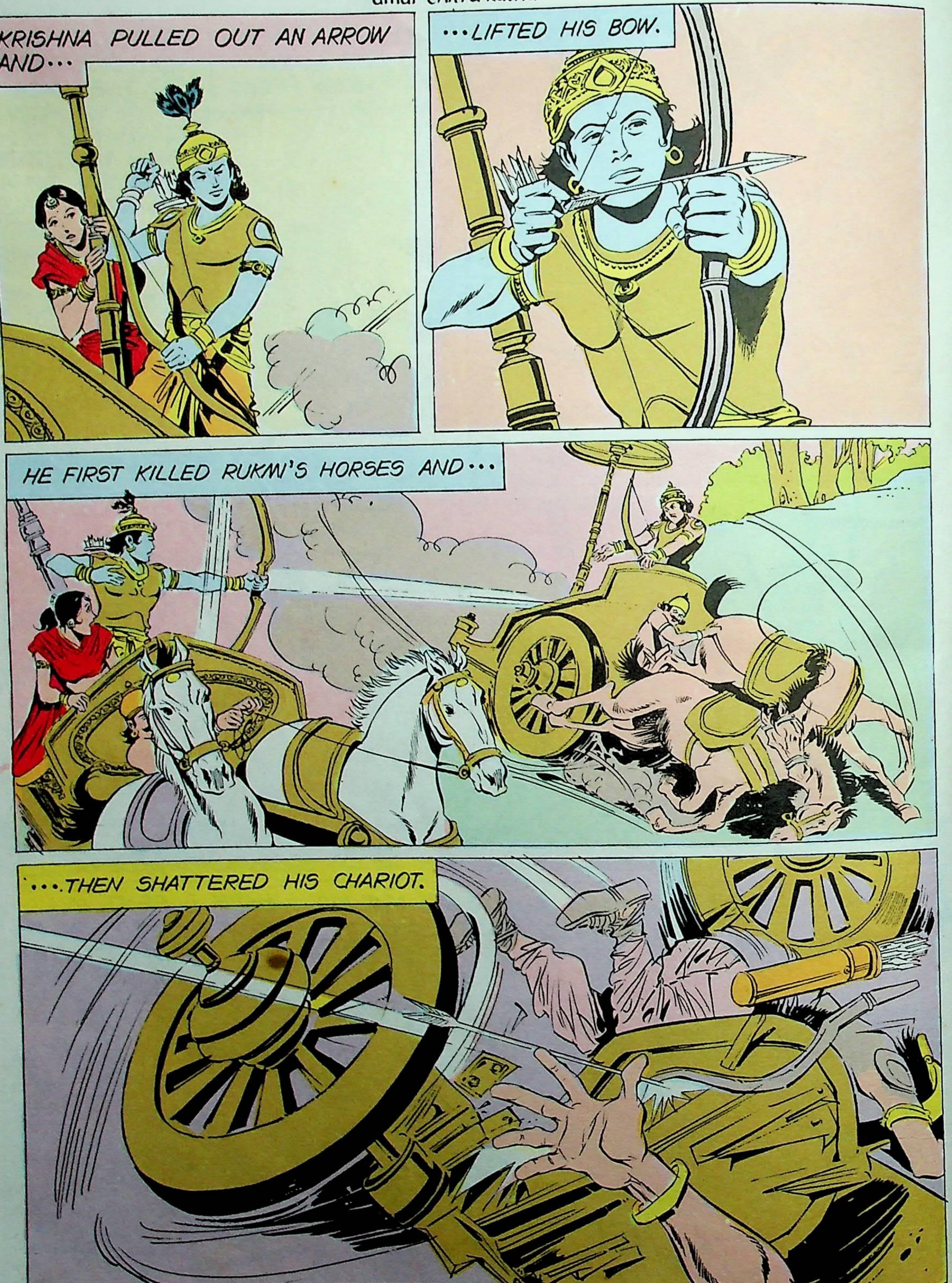

BALARAMA'S ONSLAUGHT WAS FIERCE.
LET US RETREAT, SHISHUPALA. THERE IS NO HOPE LEFT. THE COWHERDS ARE DETERMINED. RUKMINI IS LOST TO YOU.
ALAS! I FEEL AS IF MY WEDDED WIFE HAS BEEN ABDUCTED. SO SURE WAS I THAT SHE WAS MINE ALONE.

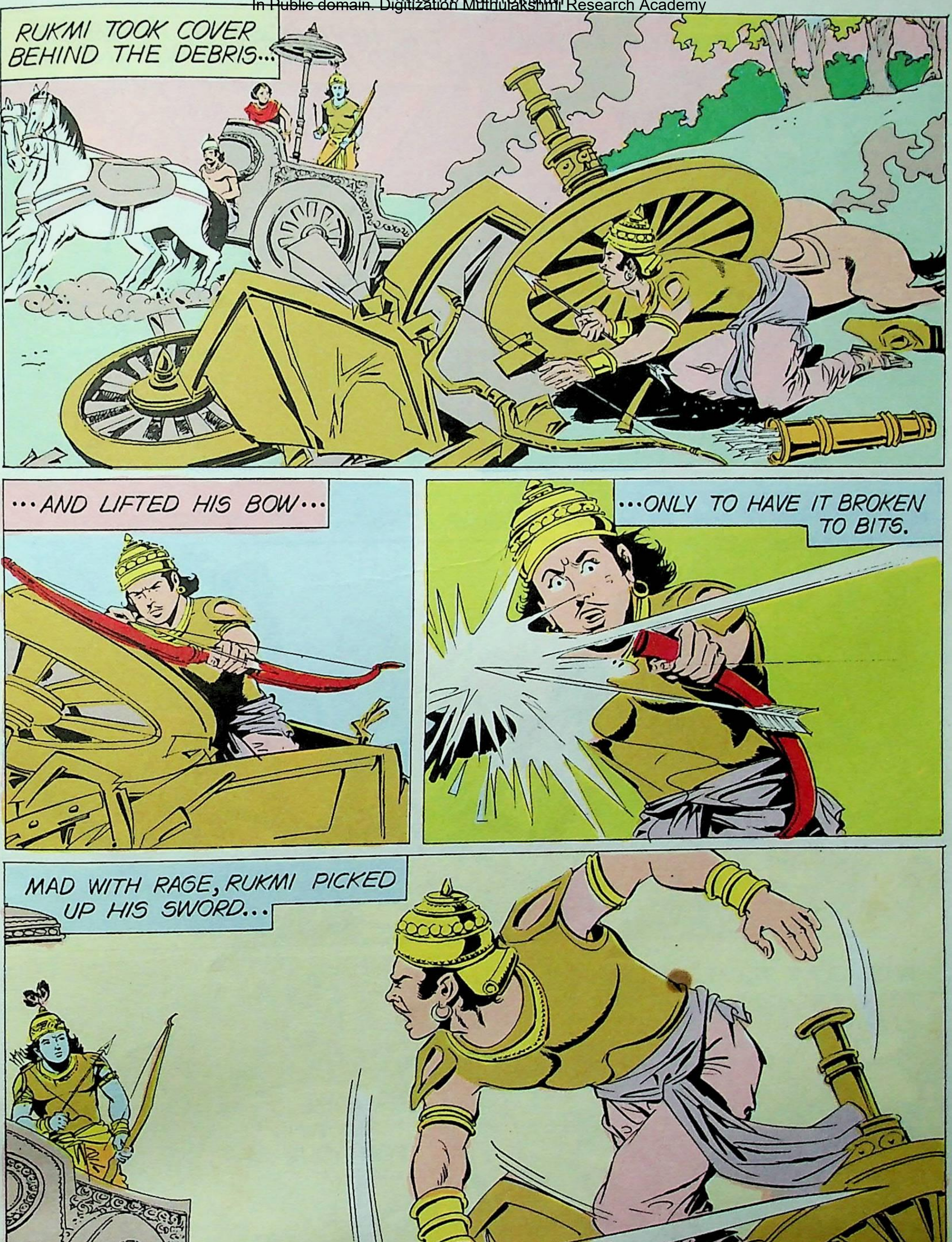

JARASANDHA TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.
DON'T GRIEVE, SHISHUPALA. FORTUNE FAVOURED THEM AND THEY WON. WE SHALL CERTAINLY DEFEAT THEM WHEN OUR LUCK TURNS.

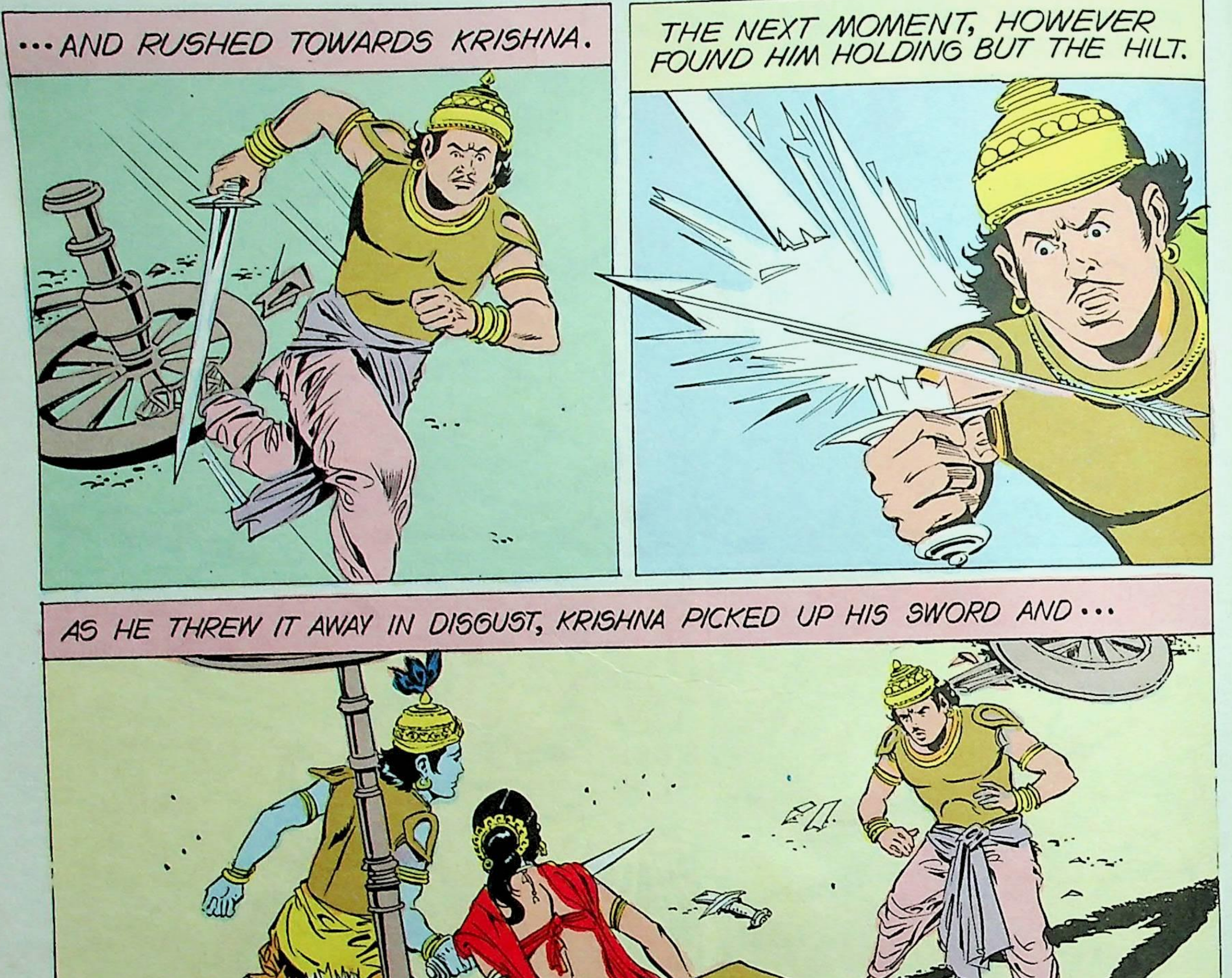

FULL OF HATRED FOR THE MAN WHO HAD WORSTED THEM, THE DISAPPOINTED SUITOR AND HIS WELL-WISHERS RETURNED TO THEIR CAPITALS.

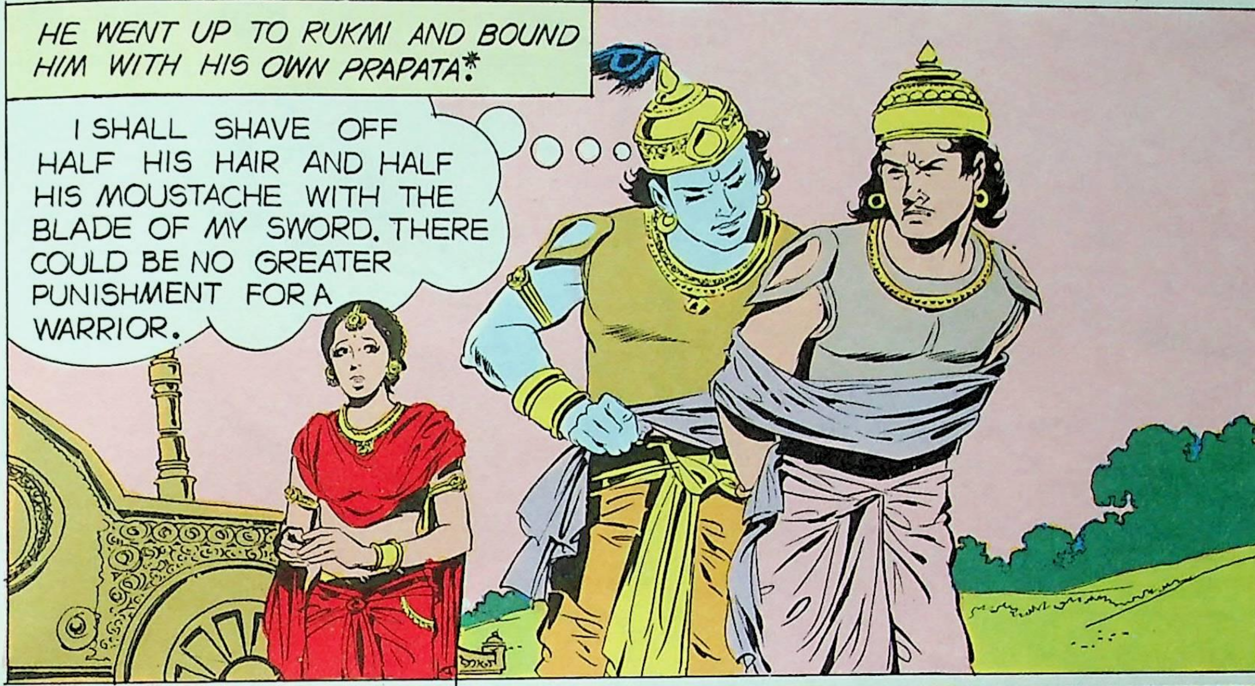

MEANWHILE, RUKMI HAD ALMOST CAUGHT UP WITH KRISHNA.
TODAY I SHALL HUMBLE THE PRIDE OF THAT COWHERD WHO DARED ABDUCT MY SISTER.

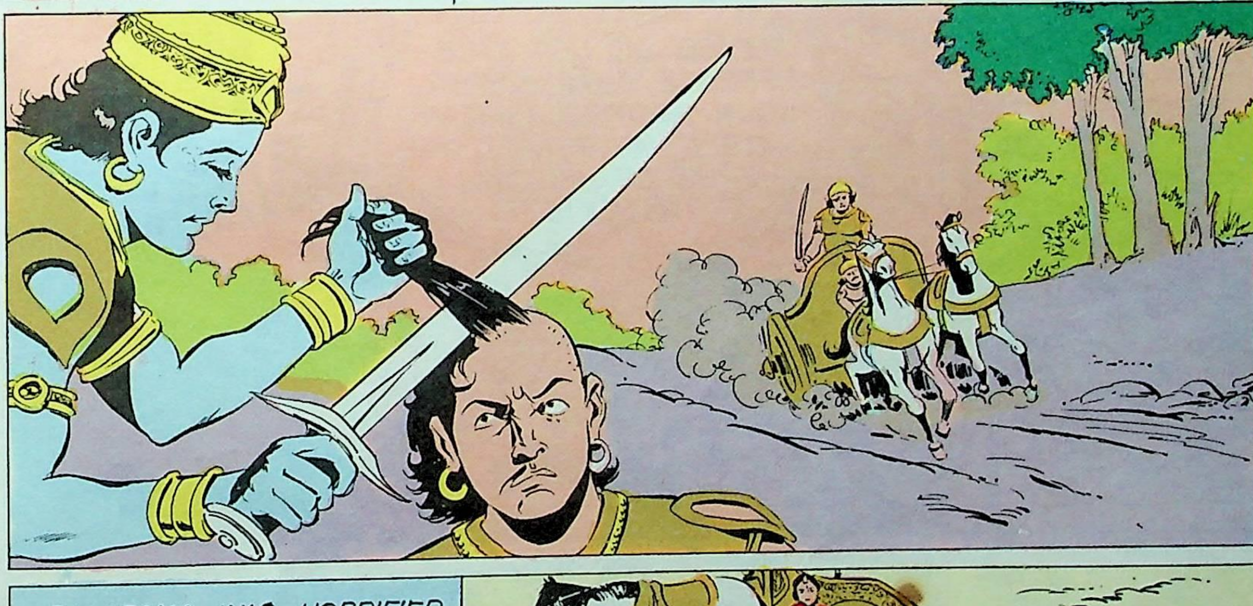

FASTER... FASTER... FASTER...
SOON HIS CHARIOT WAS BUT A FEW FEET AWAY FROM KRISHNA.
STOP! STOP! WAIT, YOU-DISGRACE TO THE RACE OF YADU! HOW DARE YOU KIDNAP MY SISTER, EVEN AS A CROW STEALS A SACRED OFFERING!
YOU WILY RASCAL. YOU HAVE PROVED YOUR CUNNING, NOW PROVE YOUR VALOUR.
RUKMI'S ARROW DID NOT EVEN MAKE A DENT IN KRISHNA'S ARMOUR.

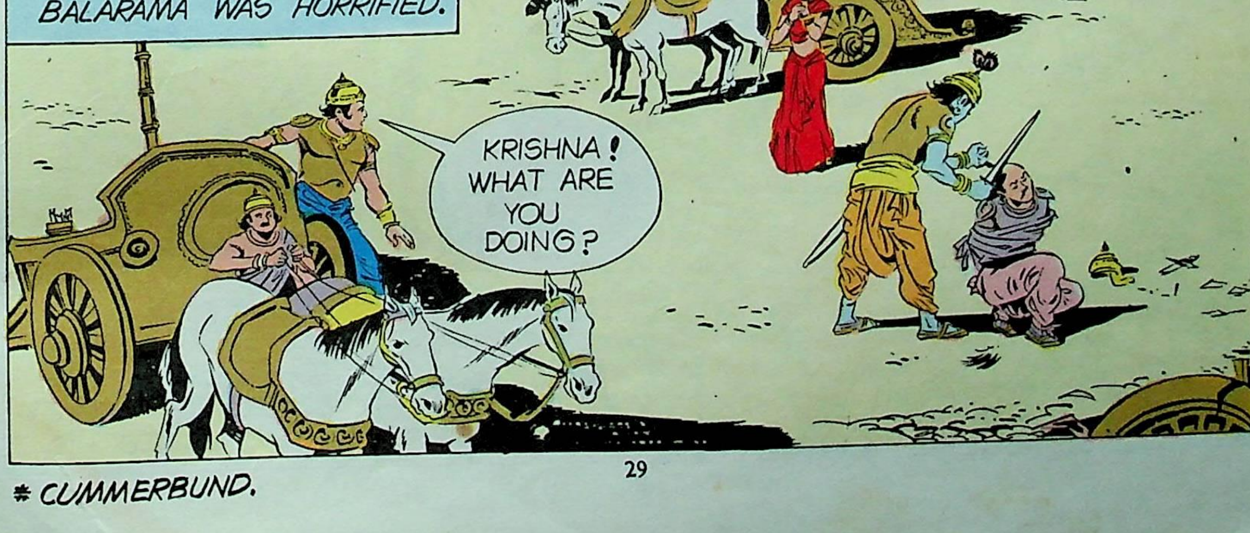

KRISHNA PULLED OUT AN ARROW AND...
...LIFTED HIS BOW.
HE FIRST KILLED RUKMI'S HORSES AND...
....THEN SHATTERED HIS CHARIOT.


RUKMI TOOK COVER BEHIND THE DEBRIS...
...AND LIFTED HIS BOW...
...ONLY TO HAVE IT BROKEN TO BITS.
MAD WITH RAGE, RUKMI PICKED UP HIS SWORD...


...AND RUSHED TOWARDS KRISHNA.
THE NEXT MOMENT, HOWEVER FOUND HIM HOLDING BUT THE HILT.
AS HE THREW IT AWAY IN DISGUST, KRISHNA PICKED UP HIS SWORD AND...
...WAS ABOUT TO RUSH TOWARDS HIM WHEN—
ARISE, RUKMINI. FOR YOUR SAKE, RUKMI SHALL LIVE.
O VIRTUOUS LORD, PLEASE SPARE MY BROTHER. PLEASE DON'T KILL HIM.

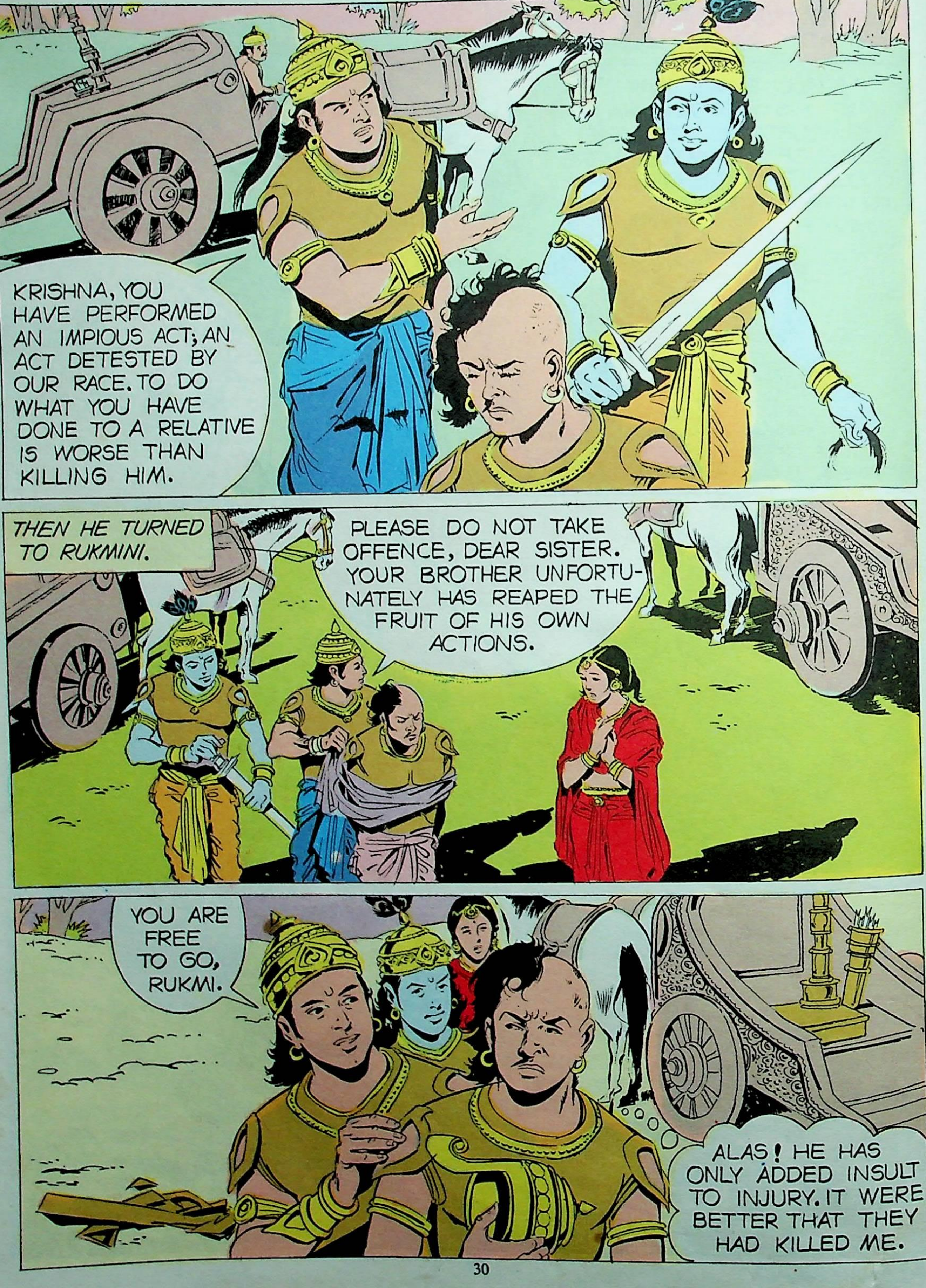

HE WENT UP TO RUKMI AND BOUND HIM WITH HIS OWN PRAPATA.*
I SHALL SHAVE OFF HALF HIS HAIR AND HALF HIS MOUSTACHE WITH THE BLADE OF MY SWORD. THERE COULD BE NO GREATER PUNISHMENT FOR A WARRIOR.

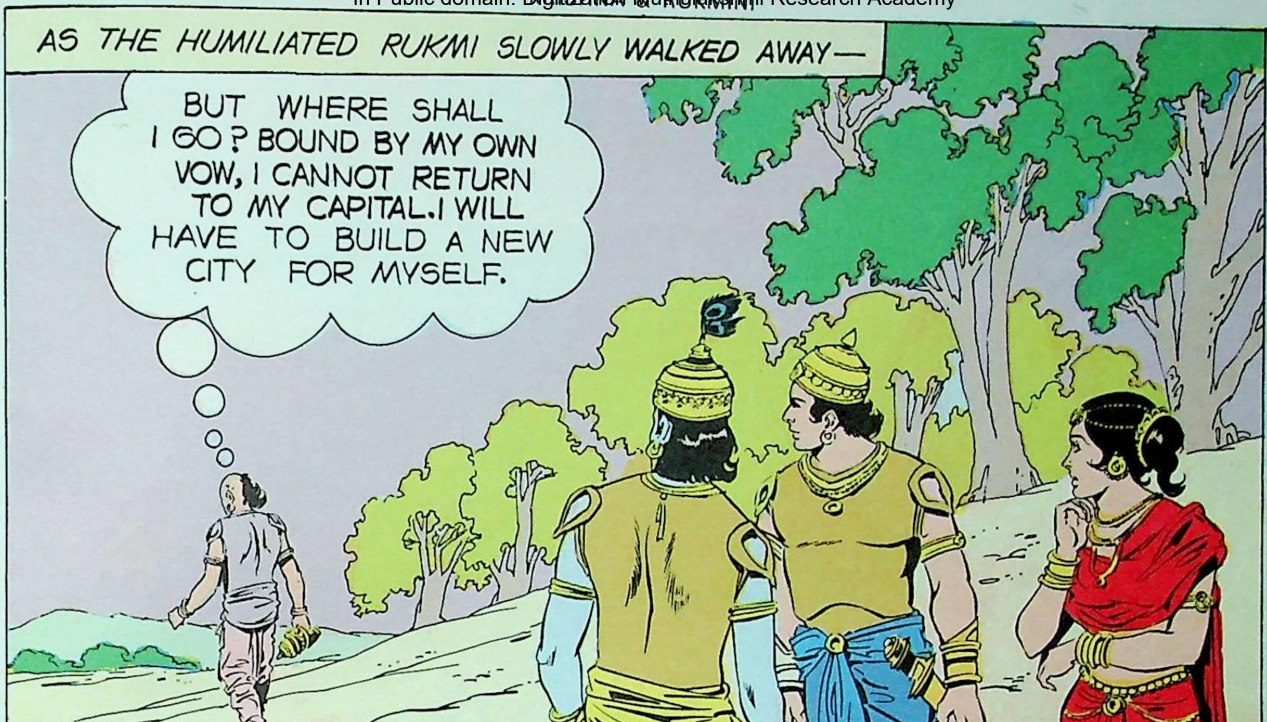


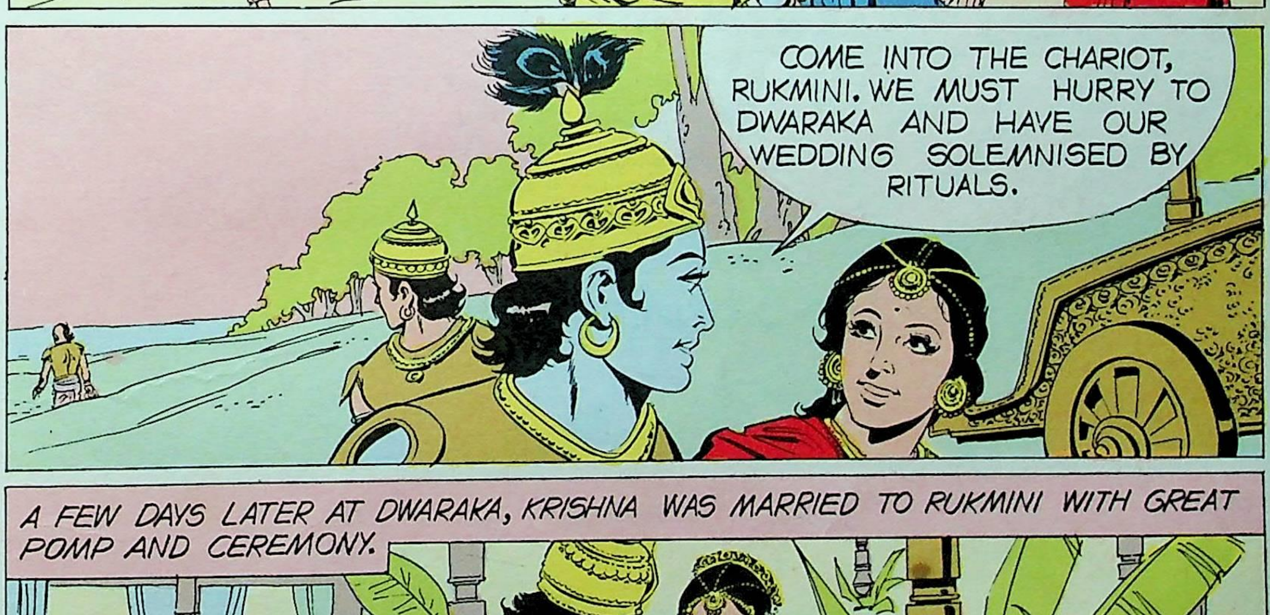

BALARAMA WAS HORRIFIED.
KRISHNA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

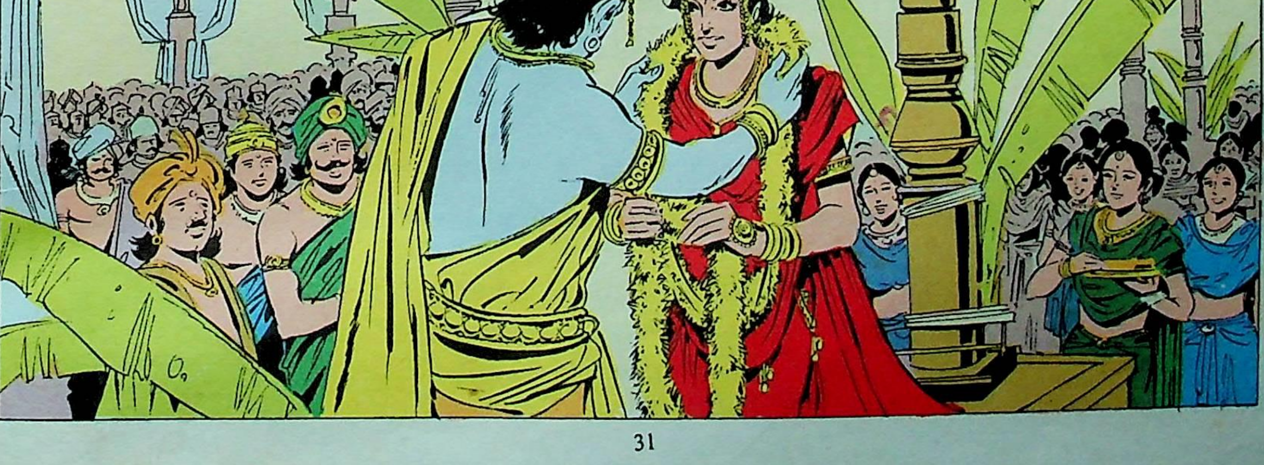
---

* CUMMERBUND.


KRISHNA, YOU HAVE PERFORMED AN IMPIOUS ACT; AN ACT DETESTED BY OUR RACE. TO DO WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO A RELATIVE IS WORSE THAN KILLING HIM.
THEN HE TURNED TO RUKMINI.
PLEASE DO NOT TAKE OFFENCE, DEAR SISTER. YOUR BROTHER UNFORTUNATELY HAS REAPED THE FRUIT OF HIS OWN ACTIONS.
YOU ARE FREE TO GO, RUKMI.
ALAS! HE HAS ONLY ADDED INSULT TO INJURY. IT WERE BETTER THAT THEY HAD KILLED ME.


AS THE HUMILIATED RUKMI SLOWLY WALKED AWAY—
BUT WHERE SHALL I GO? BOUND BY MY OWN VOW, I CANNOT RETURN TO MY CAPITAL. I WILL HAVE TO BUILD A NEW CITY FOR MYSELF.

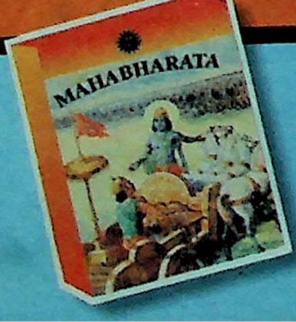

COME INTO THE CHARIOT, RUKMINI. WE MUST HURRY TO DWARAKA AND HAVE OUR WEDDING SOLEMNISED BY RITUALS.


A FEW DAYS LATER AT DWARAKA, KRISHNA WAS MARRIED TO RUKMINI WITH GREAT POMP AND CEREMONY.

"5 brave brothers fought against their 100 cousins."

The 5 brothers won.

If the **Mahabharata** could be as simple, it wouldn't have been an epic.



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KRISHNA AND JARASANDHA

KRISHNA OUTSMARTS HIS FIERCE ADVERSARY

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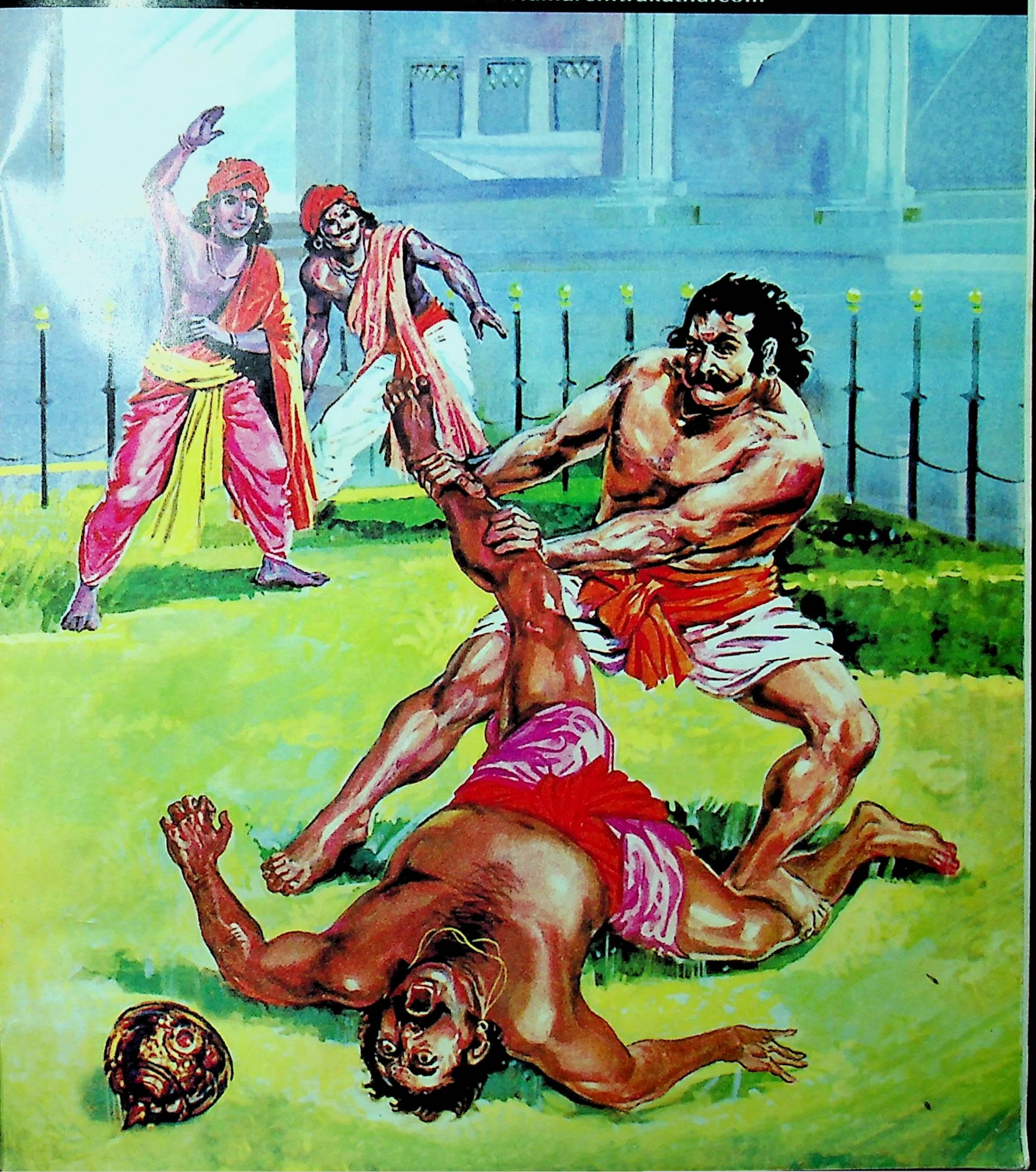


The route to your roots

KRISHNA AND JARASANDHA

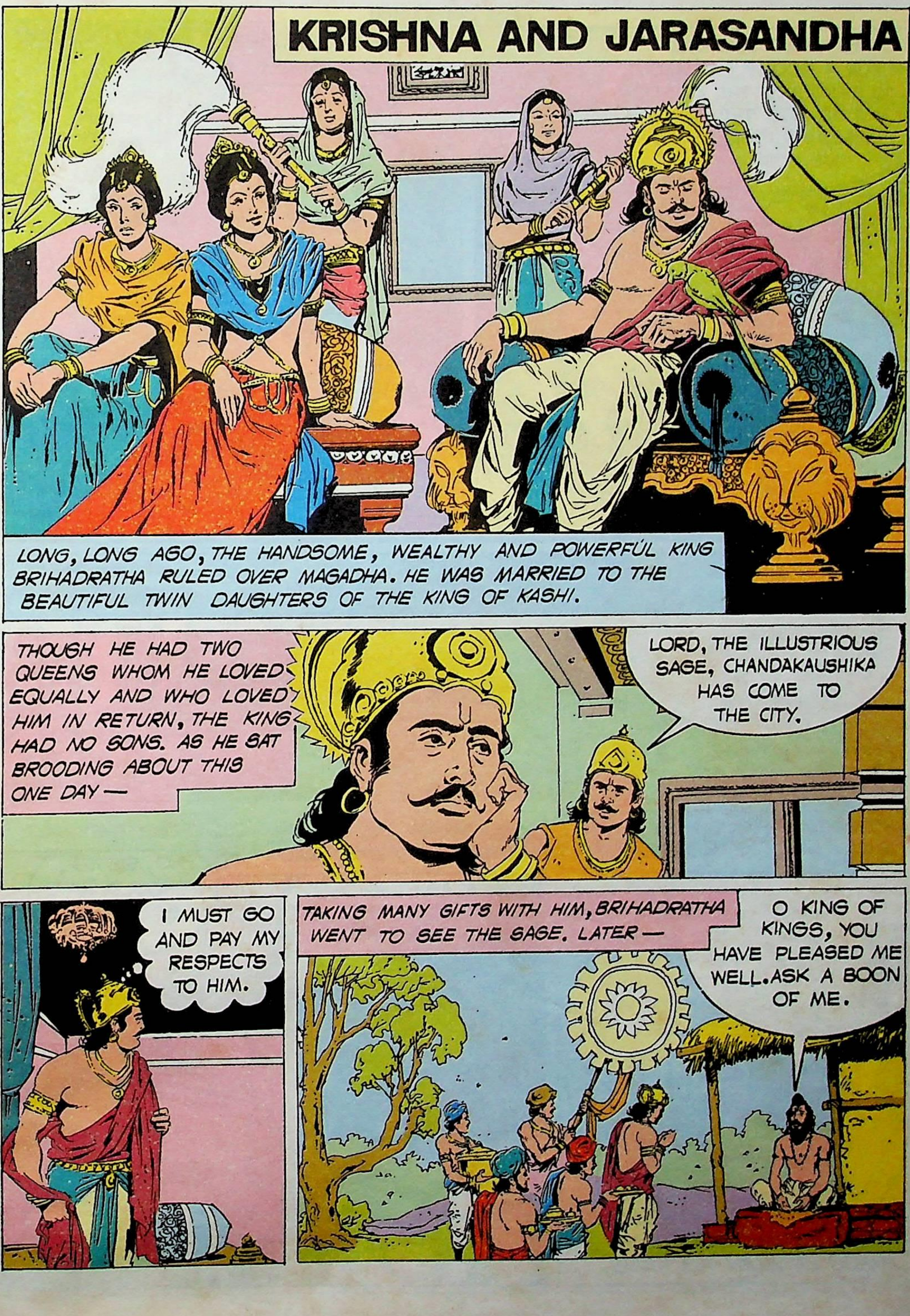
The Yadava tribe fled to distant Dwaraka to escape the wrath of the mighty Jarasandha, the ruler of Magadha. This king, whose very name made the strong quake, had to be subdued if the Pandavas were to establish their supremacy in the area. Only their cousin Krishna, a Yadava hero, could help them, and this is the tale of his triumph.

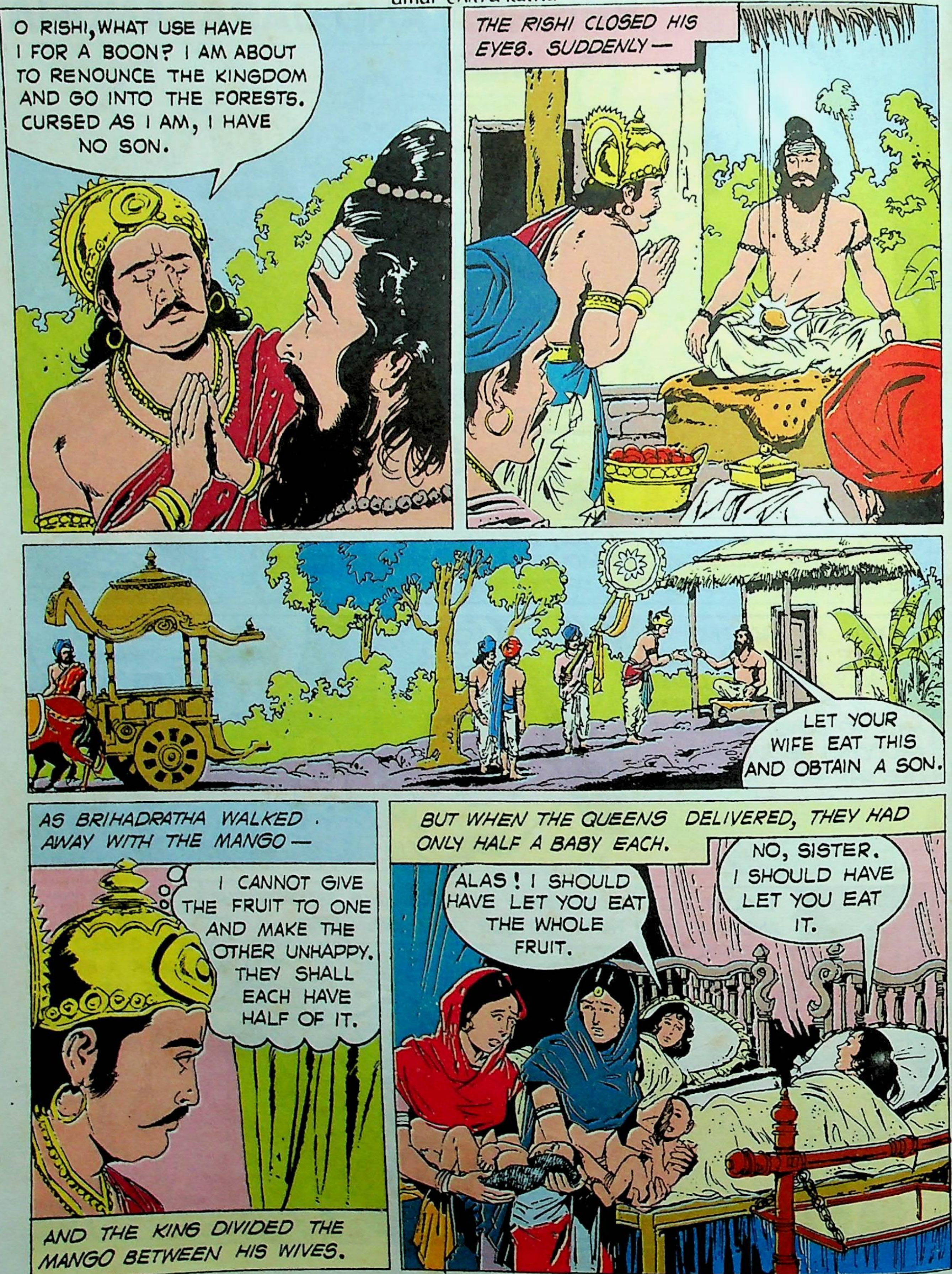
Script
Kamala Chandrakant

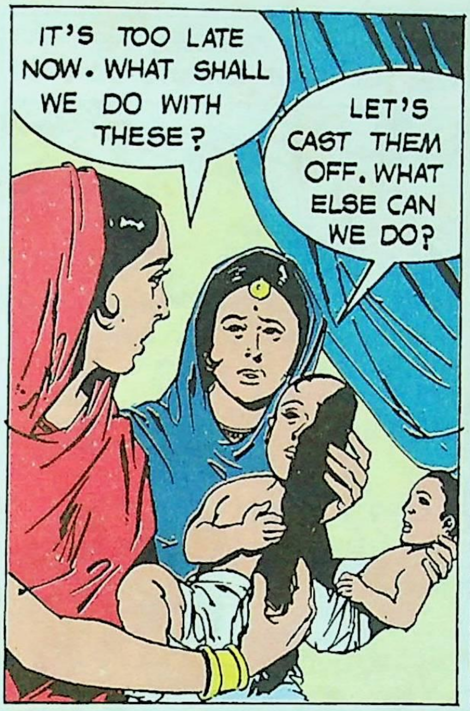
Illustrations
Pratap Mulick

Editor
Anant Pai

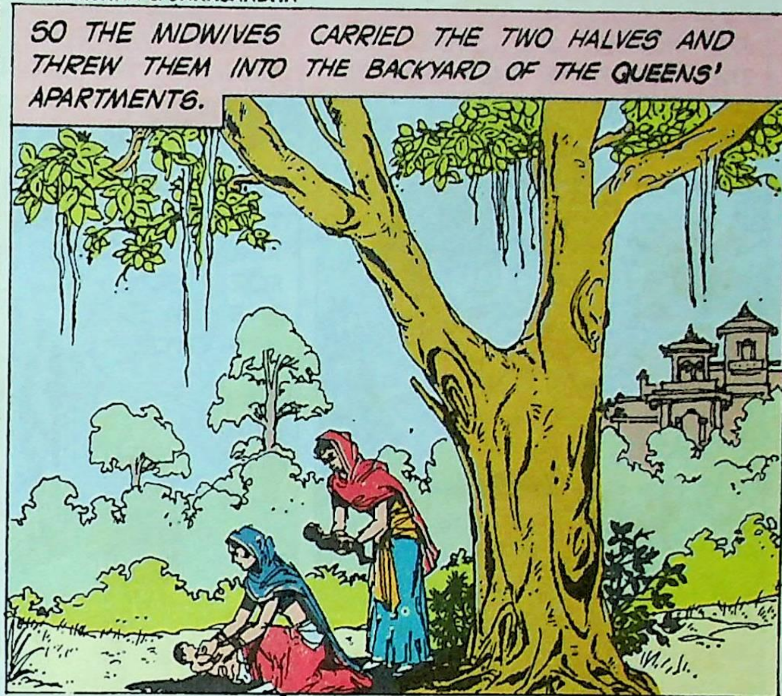
KRISHNA AND JARASANDHA


LONG, LONG AGO, THE HANDSOME, WEALTHY AND POWERFUL KING BRIHADRATHA RULED OVER MAGADHA. HE WAS MARRIED TO THE BEAUTIFUL TWIN DAUGHTERS OF THE KING OF KASHI.
THOUGH HE HAD TWO QUEENS WHOM HE LOVED EQUALLY AND WHO LOVED HIM IN RETURN, THE KING HAD NO SONS. AS HE SAT BROODING ABOUT THIS ONE DAY —
LORD, THE ILLUSTRIOUS SAGE, CHANDAKAUSHIKA HAS COME TO THE CITY.
I MUST GO AND PAY MY RESPECTS TO HIM.
TAKING MANY GIFTS WITH HIM, BRIHADRATHA WENT TO SEE THE SAGE. LATER —
O KING OF KINGS, YOU HAVE PLEASED ME WELL. ASK A BOON OF ME.

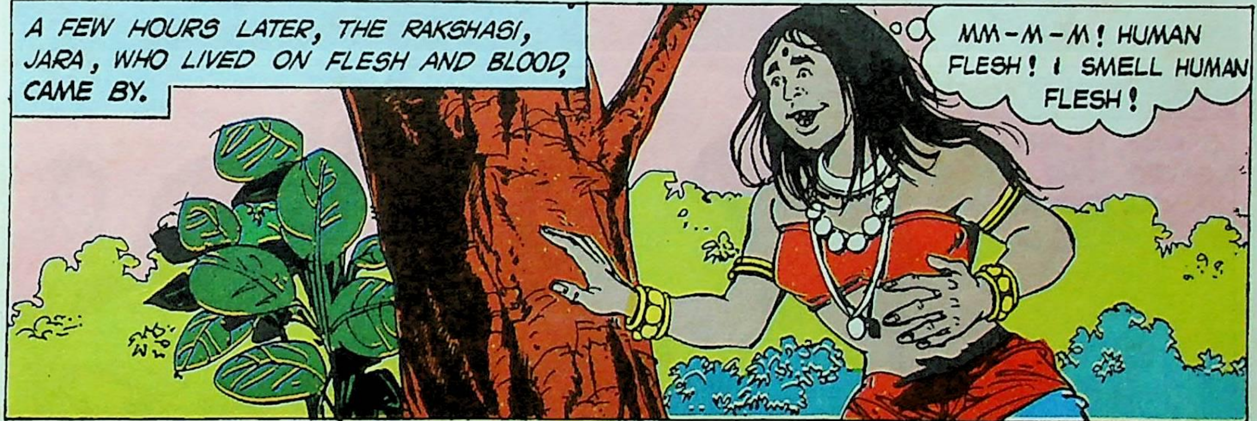

O RISHI, WHAT USE HAVE I FOR A BOON? I AM ABOUT TO RENOUNCE THE KINGDOM AND GO INTO THE FORESTS. CURSED AS I AM, I HAVE NO SON.
THE RISHI CLOSED HIS EYES. SUDDENLY —
LET YOUR WIFE EAT THIS AND OBTAIN A SON.
AS BRIHADRATHA WALKED AWAY WITH THE MANGO —
I CANNOT GIVE THE FRUIT TO ONE AND MAKE THE OTHER UNHAPPY. THEY SHALL EACH HAVE HALF OF IT.
AND THE KING DIVIDED THE MANGO BETWEEN HIS WIVES.
BUT WHEN THE QUEENS DELIVERED, THEY HAD ONLY HALF A BABY EACH.
ALAS! I SHOULD HAVE LET YOU EAT THE WHOLE FRUIT.
NO, SISTER. I SHOULD HAVE LET YOU EAT IT.


IT'S TOO LATE NOW. WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THESE?
LET'S CAST THEM OFF. WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

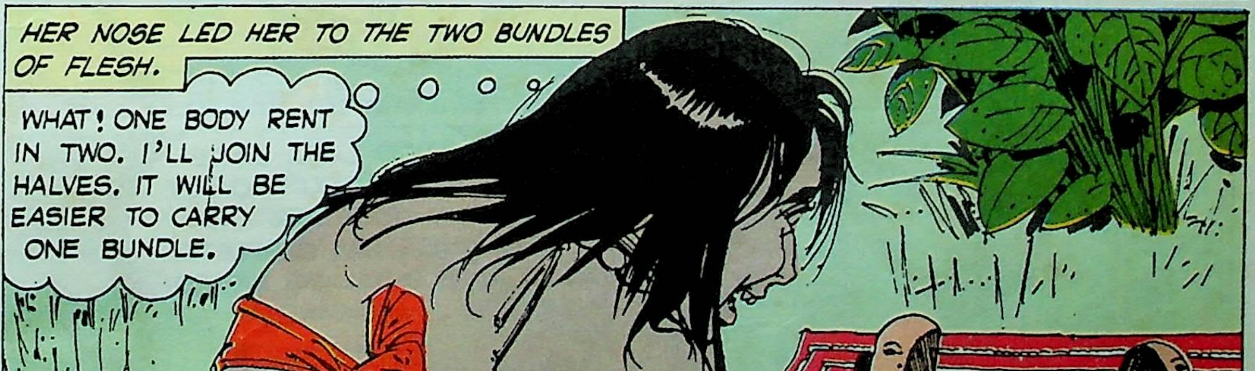
SO THE MIDWIVES CARRIED THE TWO HALVES AND THREW THEM INTO THE BACKYARD OF THE QUEENS' APARTMENTS.

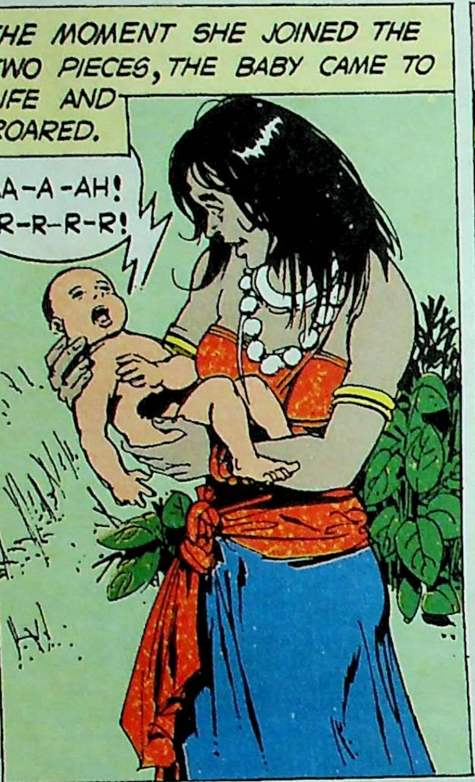


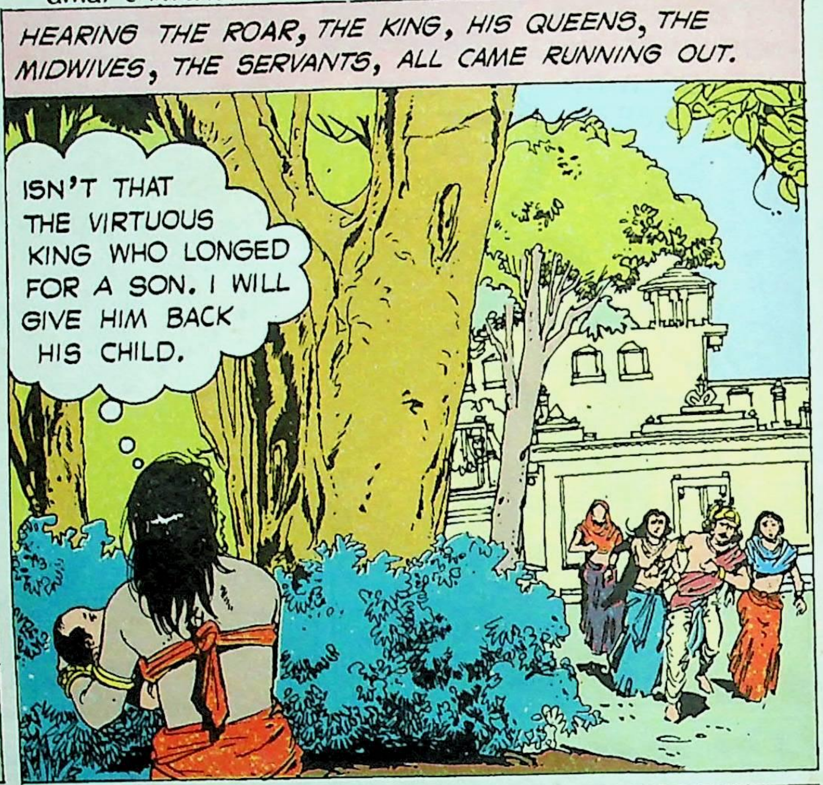
A FEW HOURS LATER, THE RAKSHASI, JARA, WHO LIVED ON FLESH AND BLOOD, CAME BY.

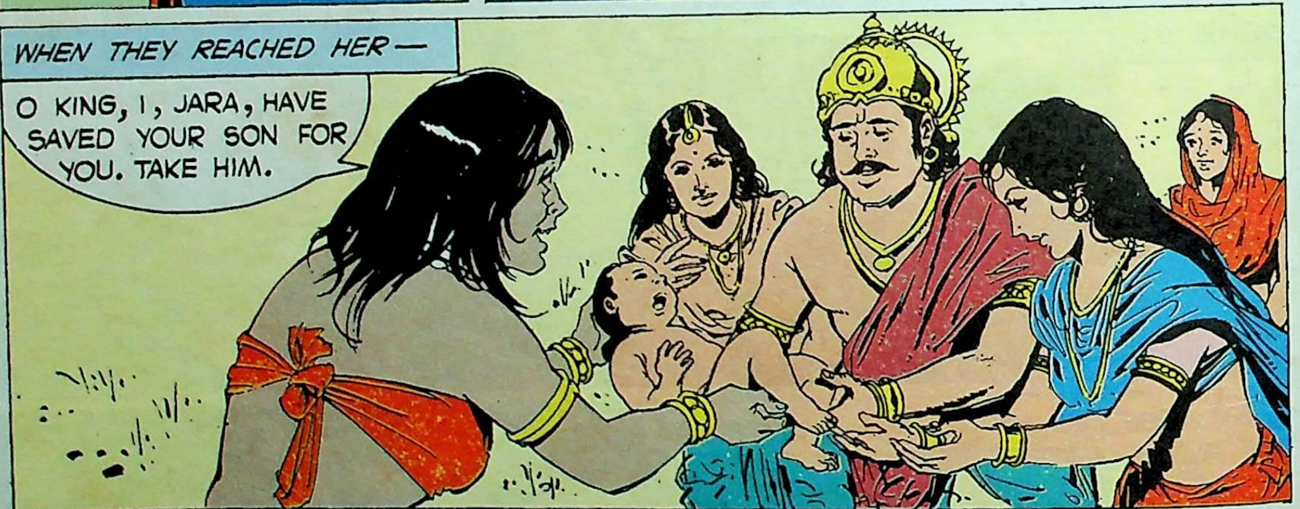

MM-M-M! HUMAN FLESH! I SMELL HUMAN FLESH!

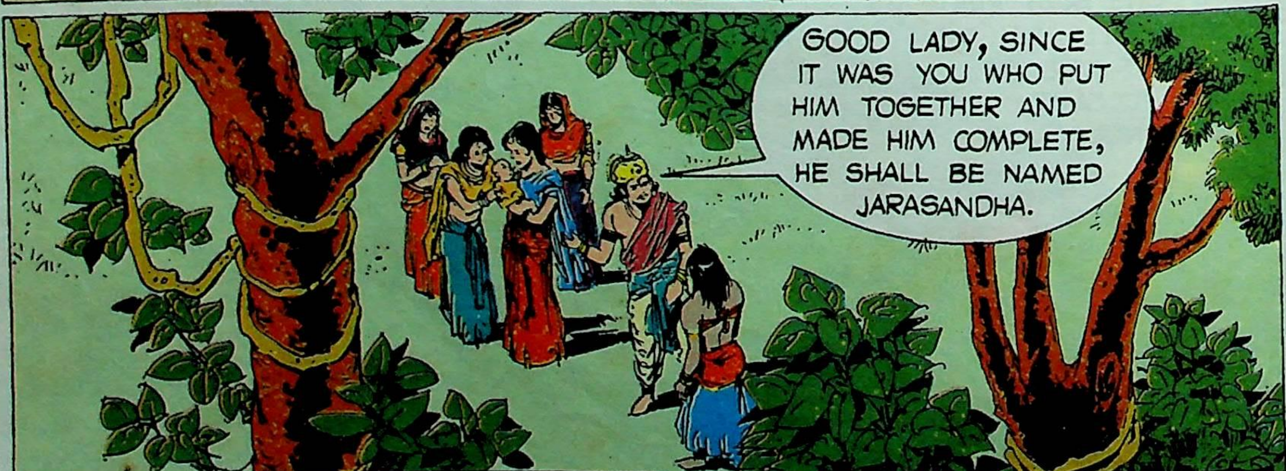
HER NOSE LED HER TO THE TWO BUNDLES OF FLESH.

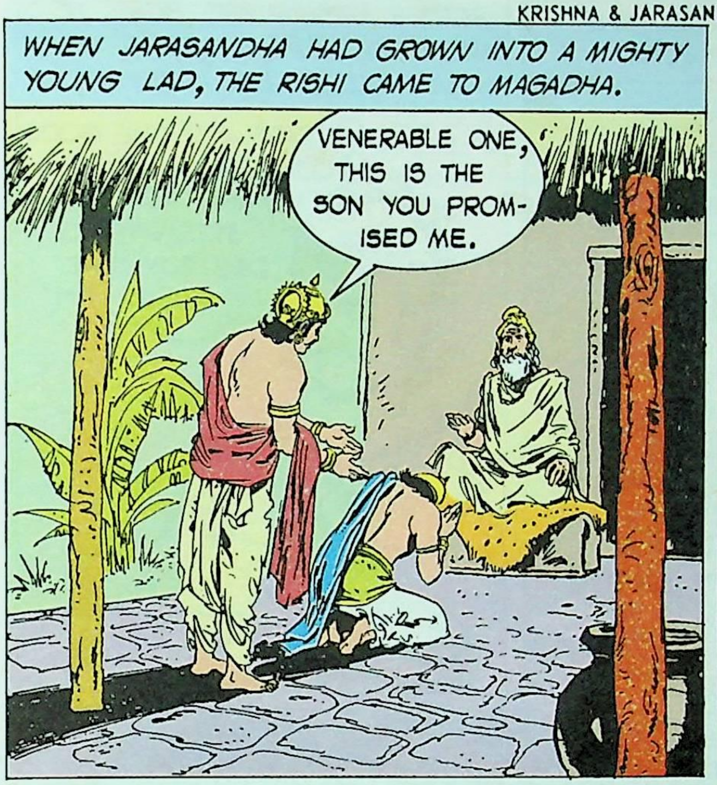

WHAT! ONE BODY RENT IN TWO. I'LL JOIN THE HALVES. IT WILL BE EASIER TO CARRY ONE BUNDLE.

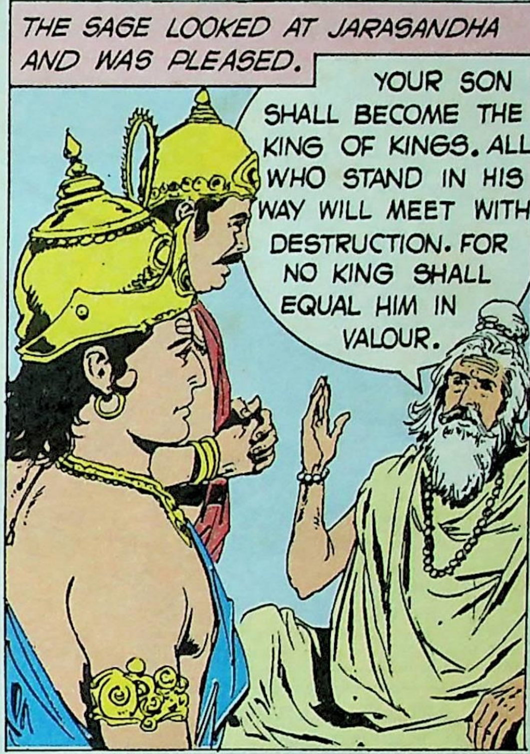

THE MOMENT SHE JOINED THE TWO PIECES, THE BABY CAME TO LIFE AND ROARED.
AA-A-AH! GR-R-R-R!

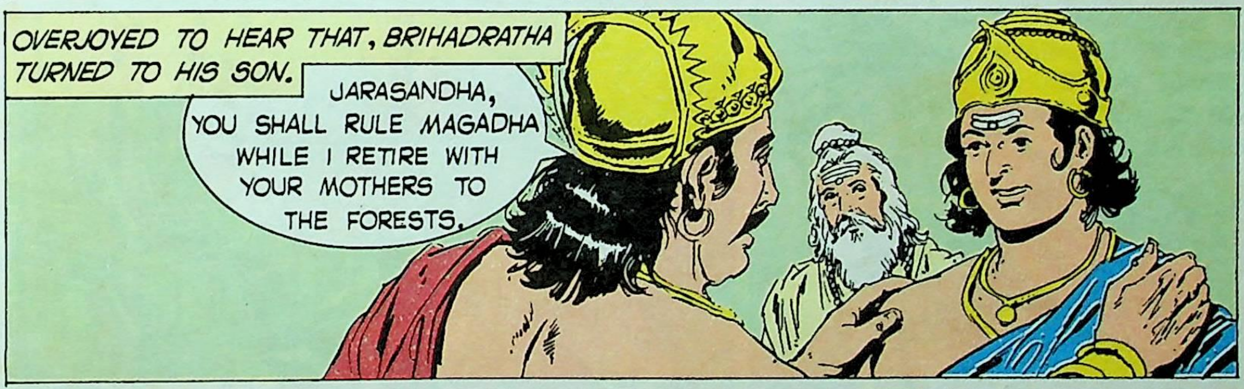

HEARING THE ROAR, THE KING, HIS QUEENS, THE MIDWIVES, THE SERVANTS, ALL CAME RUNNING OUT.
ISN'T THAT THE VIRTUOUS KING WHO LONGED FOR A SON. I WILL GIVE HIM BACK HIS CHILD.

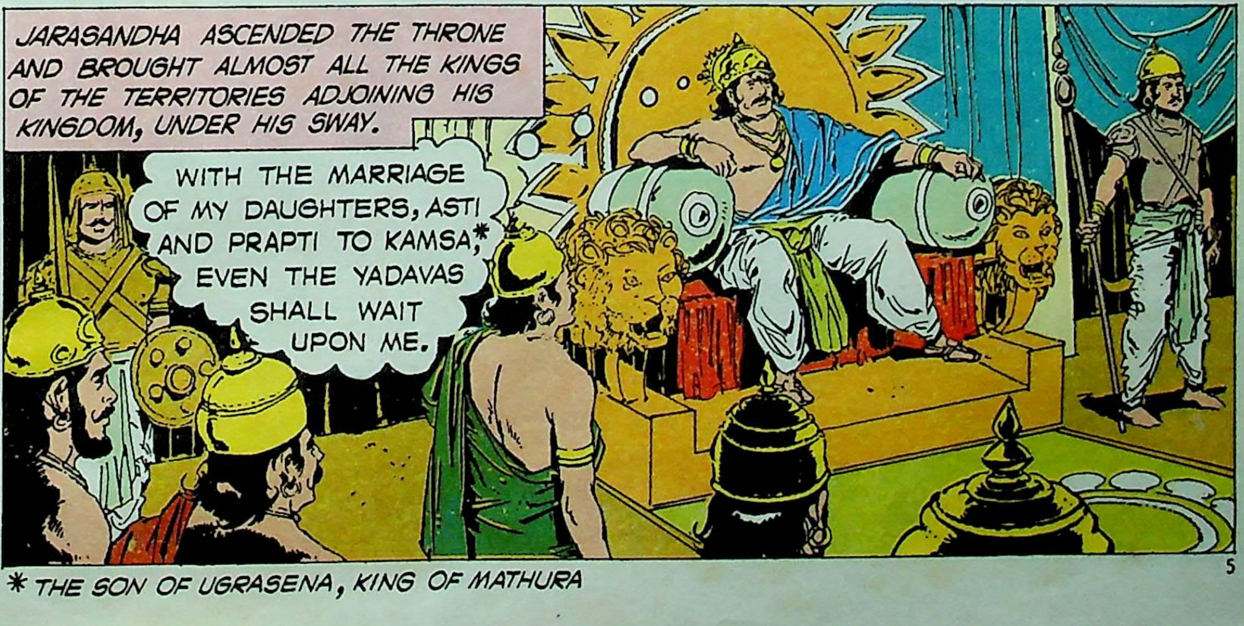

WHEN THEY REACHED HER —
O KING, I, JARA, HAVE SAVED YOUR SON FOR YOU. TAKE HIM.


GOOD LADY, SINCE IT WAS YOU WHO PUT HIM TOGETHER AND MADE HIM COMPLETE, HE SHALL BE NAMED JARASANDHA.

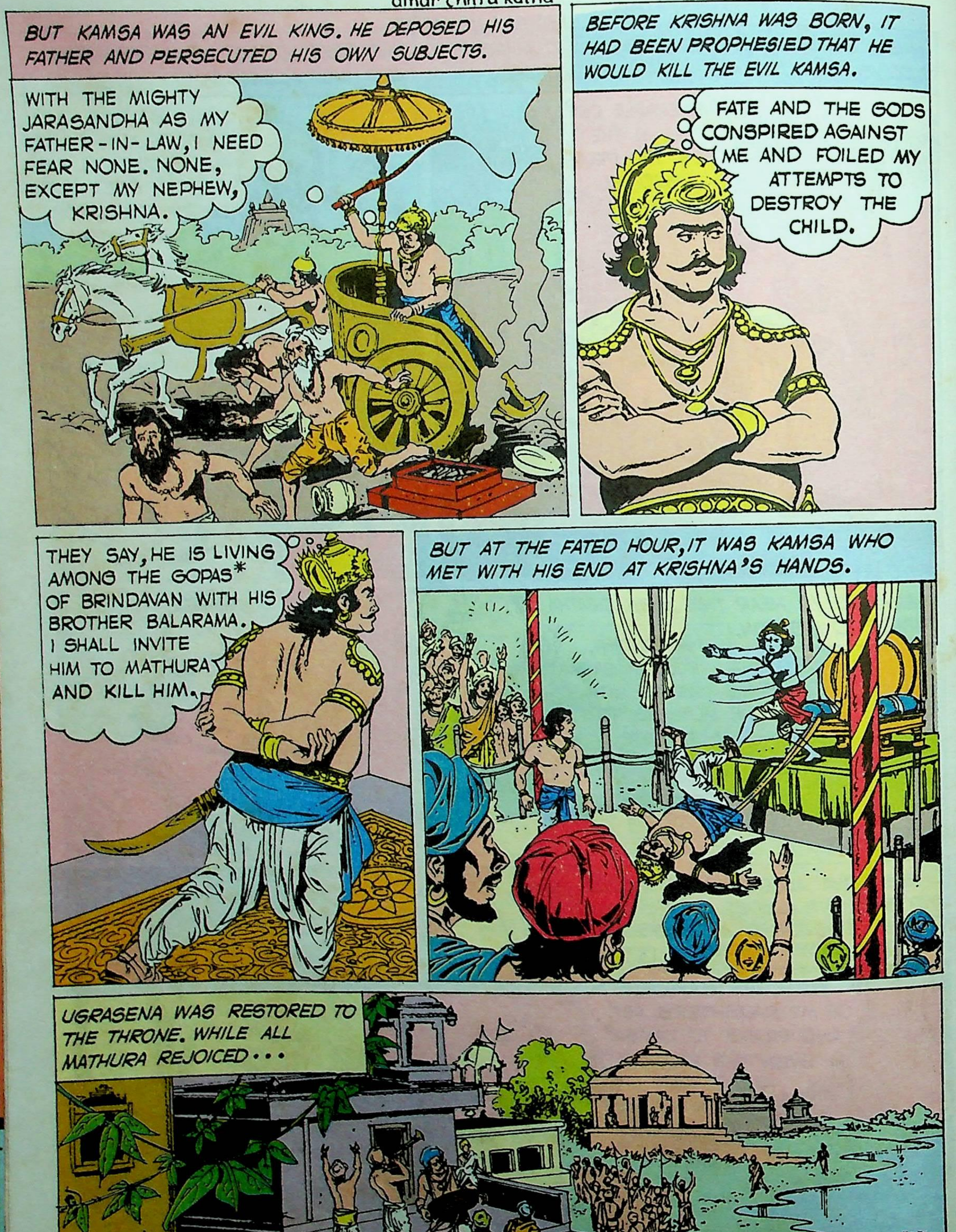

WHEN JARASANDHA HAD GROWN INTO A MIGHTY YOUNG LAD, THE RISHI CAME TO MAGADHA.
VENERABLE ONE, THIS IS THE SON YOU PROMISED ME.


THE SAGE LOOKED AT JARASANDHA AND WAS PLEASED.
YOUR SON SHALL BECOME THE KING OF KINGS. ALL WHO STAND IN HIS WAY WILL MEET WITH DESTRUCTION. FOR NO KING SHALL EQUAL HIM IN VALOUR.


OVERJOYED TO HEAR THAT, BRIHADRATHA TURNED TO HIS SON.
JARASANDHA, YOU SHALL RULE MAGADHA WHILE I RETIRE WITH YOUR MOTHERS TO THE FORESTS.

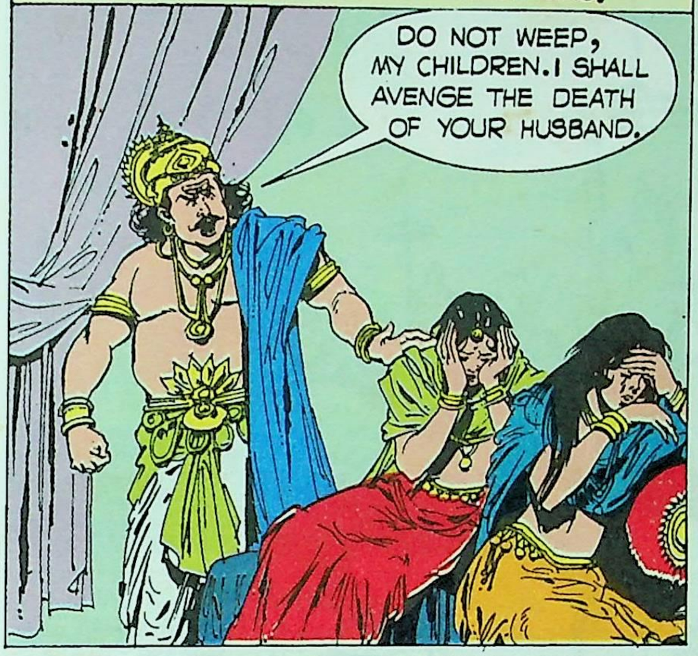

JARASANDHA ASCENDED THE THRONE AND BROUGHT ALMOST ALL THE KINGS OF THE TERRITORIES ADJOINING HIS KINGDOM, UNDER HIS SWAY.
WITH THE MARRIAGE OF MY DAUGHTERS, ASTI AND PRAPTI TO KAMSA,* EVEN THE YADAVAS SHALL WAIT UPON ME.

* THE SON OF UGRASENA, KING OF MATHURA

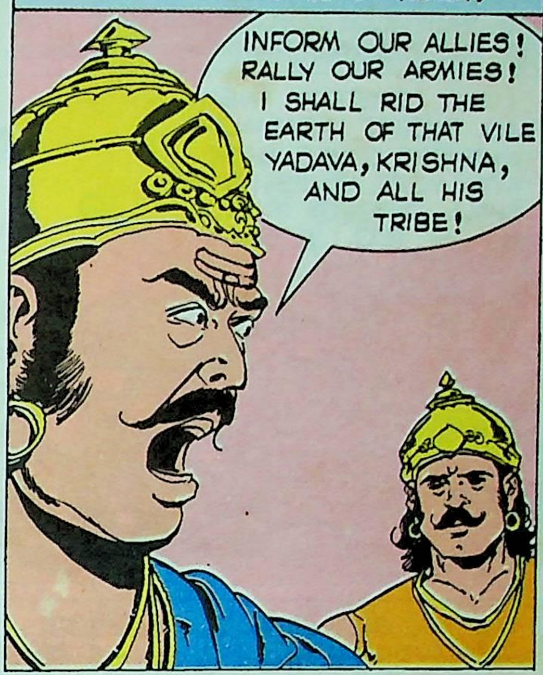

BUT KAMSA WAS AN EVIL KING. HE DEPOSED HIS FATHER AND PERSECUTED HIS OWN SUBJECTS.
WITH THE MIGHTY JARASANDHA AS MY FATHER-IN-LAW, I NEED FEAR NONE. NONE, EXCEPT MY NEPHEW, KRISHNA.
BEFORE KRISHNA WAS BORN, IT HAD BEEN PROPHESIED THAT HE WOULD KILL THE EVIL KAMSA.
FATE AND THE GODS CONSPIRED AGAINST ME AND FOILED MY ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY THE CHILD.
THEY SAY, HE IS LIVING AMONG THE GOPAS* OF BRINDAVAN WITH HIS BROTHER BALARAMA. I SHALL INVITE HIM TO MATHURA AND KILL HIM.
BUT AT THE FATED HOUR, IT WAS KAMSA WHO MET WITH HIS END AT KRISHNA'S HANDS.
UGRASENA WAS RESTORED TO THE THRONE. WHILE ALL MATHURA REJOICED...

* COWHERDS

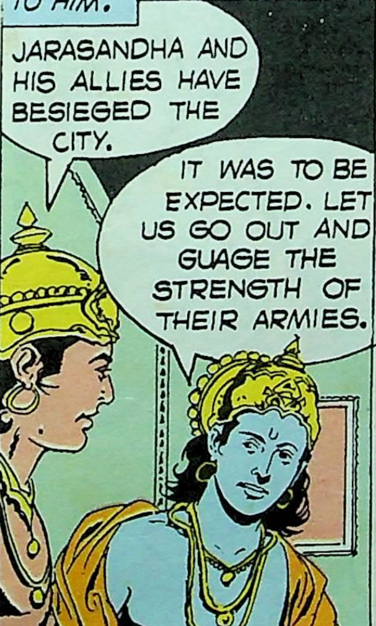
...AT MAGADHA, JARASANDHA WAS INFURIATED WHEN HE SAW HIS WIDOWED DAUGHTERS.


DO NOT WEEP, MY CHILDREN. I SHALL AVENGE THE DEATH OF YOUR HUSBAND.

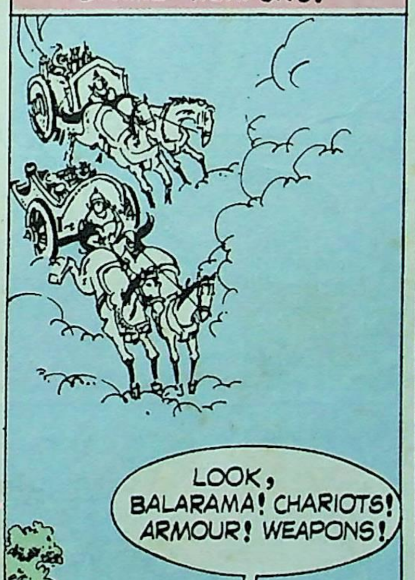
HE TURNED TO HIS COMMANDER.

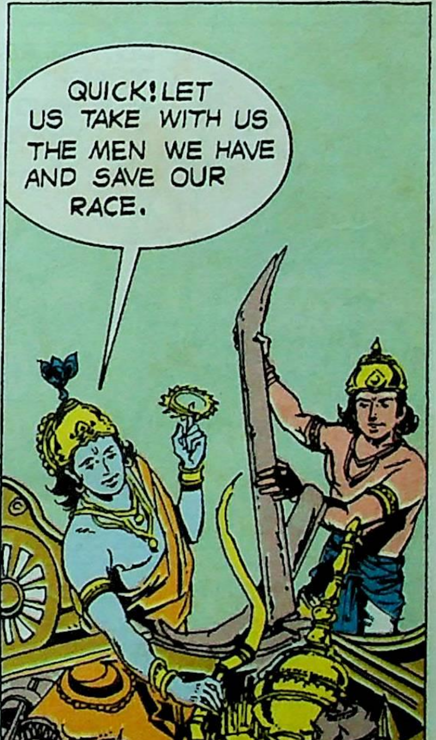

INFORM OUR ALLIES! RALLY OUR ARMIES! I SHALL RID THE EARTH OF THAT VILE YADAVA, KRISHNA, AND ALL HIS TRIBE!

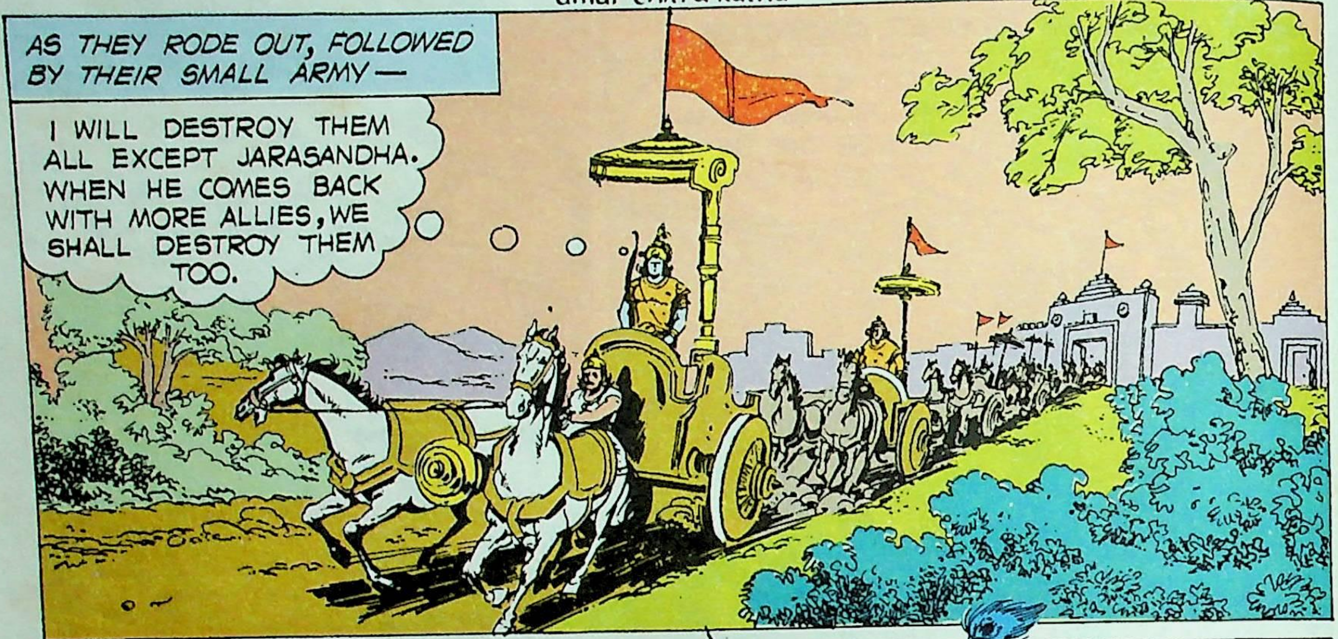
A FEW DAYS LATER, KRISHNA'S ELDER BROTHER, BALARAMA CAME TO HIM.

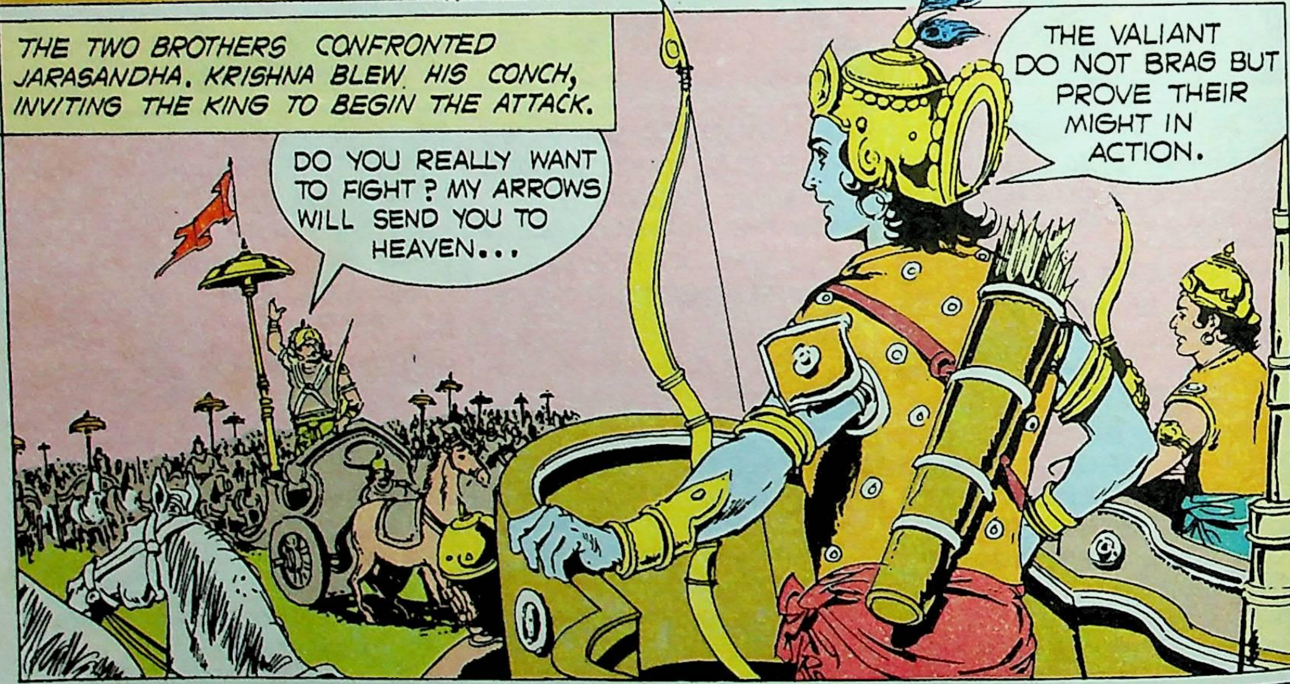

JARASANDHA AND HIS ALLIES HAVE BESIEGED THE CITY.
IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED. LET US GO OUT AND GUAGE THE STRENGTH OF THEIR ARMIES.

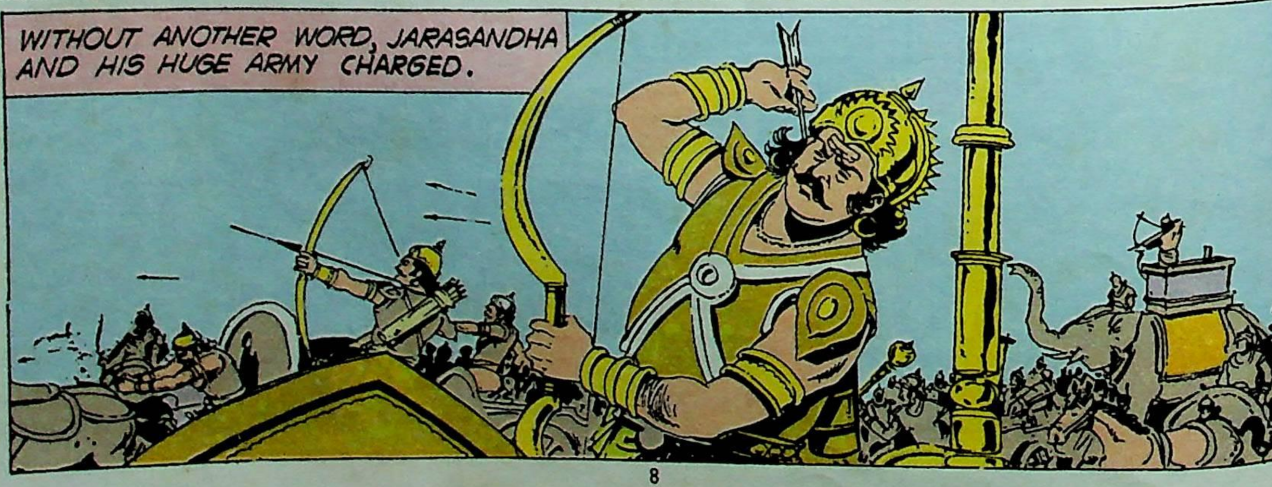
AS THEY STOOD SURVEYING THE SCENE, TWO CHARIOTS SUDDENLY DESCENDED FROM THE HEAVENS, FULL OF DIVINE WEAPONS.

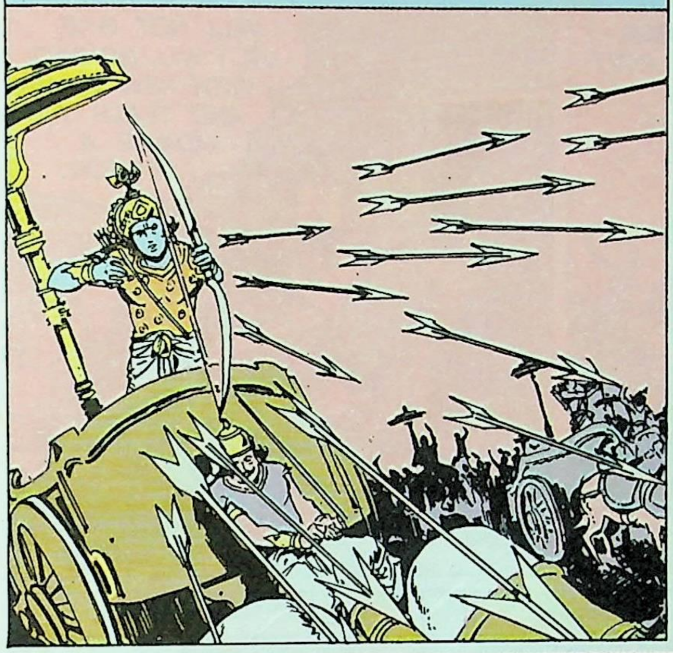

LOOK, BALARAMA! CHARIOTS! ARMOUR! WEAPONS!


QUICK! LET US TAKE WITH US THE MEN WE HAVE AND SAVE OUR RACE.

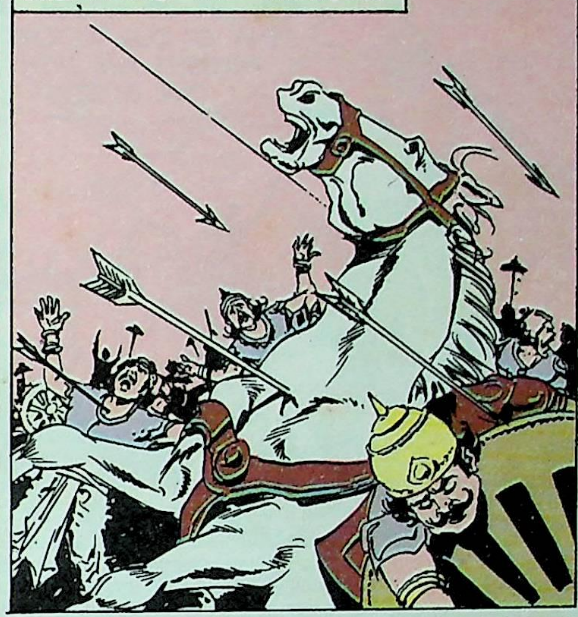

AS THEY RODE OUT, FOLLOWED BY THEIR SMALL ARMY—
I WILL DESTROY THEM ALL EXCEPT JARASANDHA. WHEN HE COMES BACK WITH MORE ALLIES, WE SHALL DESTROY THEM TOO.


THE TWO BROTHERS CONFRONTED JARASANDHA. KRISHNA BLEW HIS CONCH, INVITING THE KING TO BEGIN THE ATTACK.
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO FIGHT? MY ARROWS WILL SEND YOU TO HEAVEN...
THE VALIANT DO NOT BRAG BUT PROVE THEIR MIGHT IN ACTION.

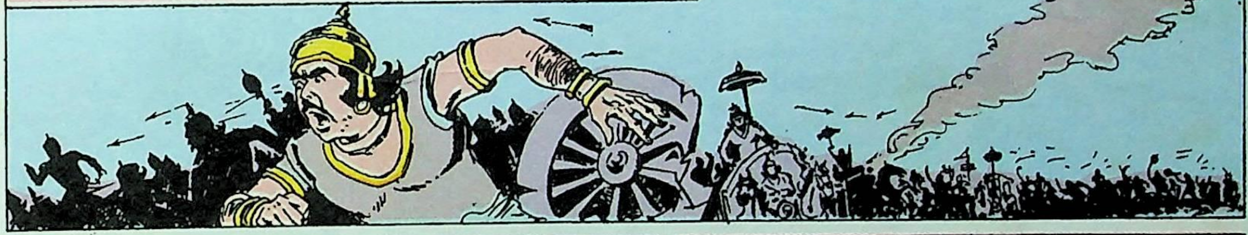

WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, JARASANDHA AND HIS HUGE ARMY CHARGED.



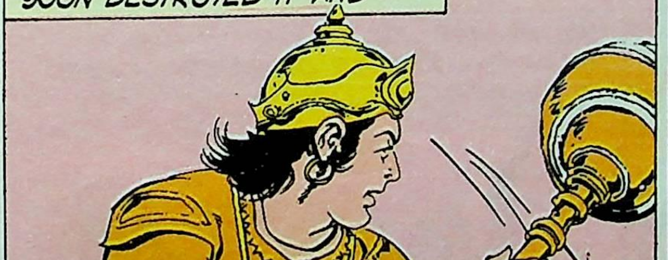
BUT KRISHNA DREW OUT HIS BOW AND LET FLY HIS ARROWS IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION...



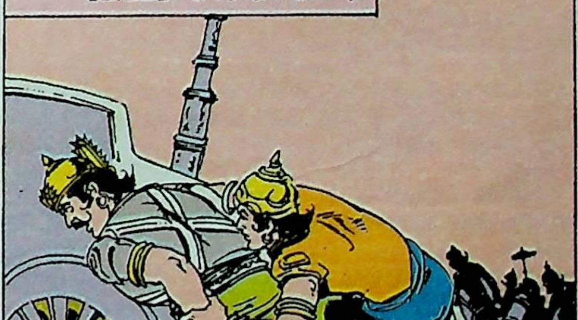
...THAT THE FIELD WAS SOON STREWN WITH THE BODIES OF MEN, HORSES, ELEPHANTS AND CHARIOTS.



THE ALLIES AND THEIR ARMIES BEGAN TO FLEE.

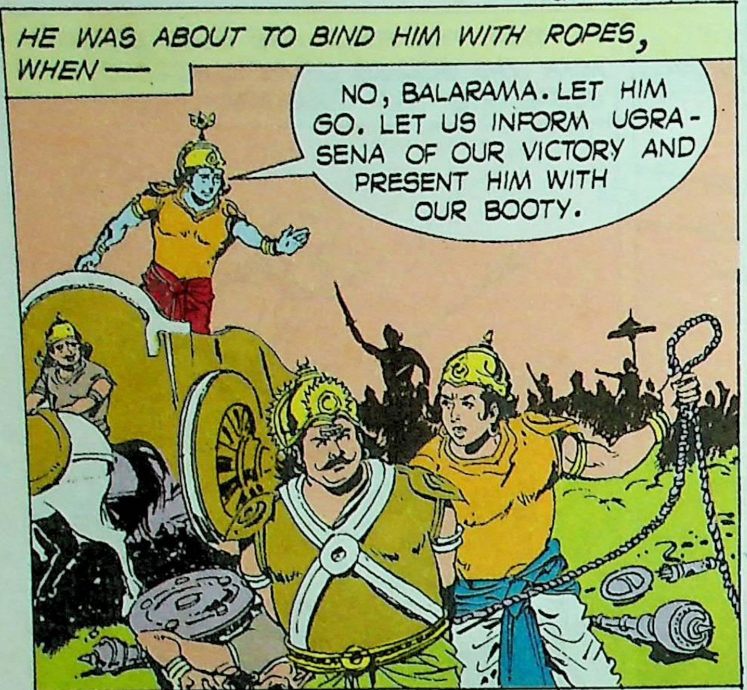


MEANWHILE, SWINGING HIS MACE, BALARAMA WHO HAD TAKEN ON JARASANDHA'S OWN ARMY, SOON DESTROYED IT AND...

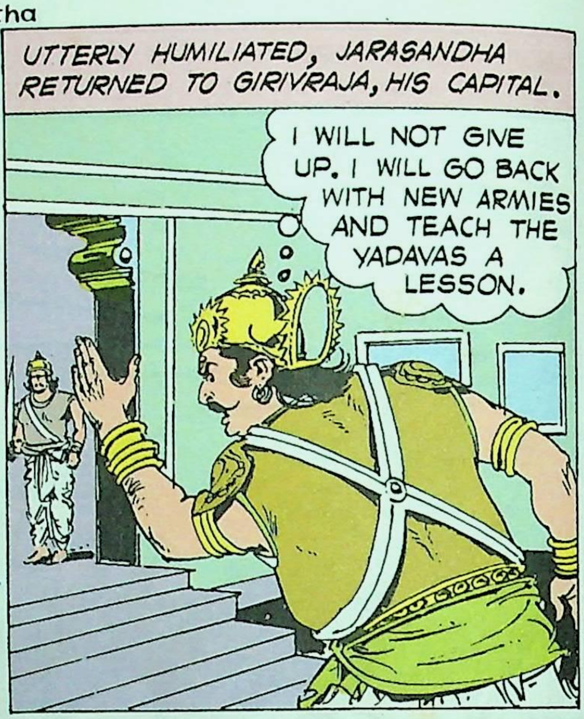


... SEIZED JARASANDHA.

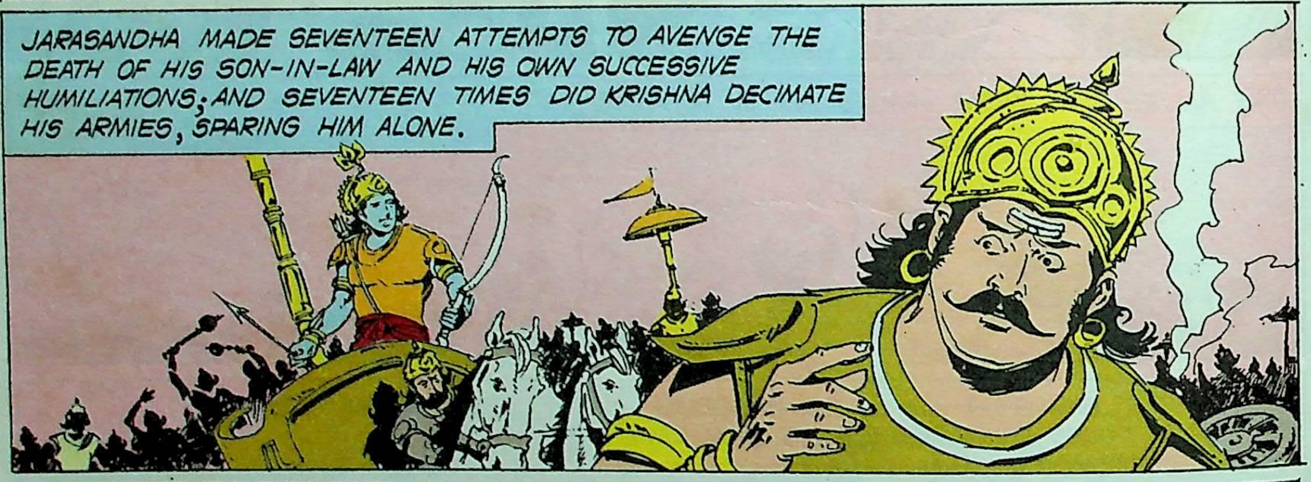
HE WAS ABOUT TO BIND HIM WITH ROPES, WHEN —


NO, BALARAMA. LET HIM GO. LET US INFORM UGRASENA OF OUR VICTORY AND PRESENT HIM WITH OUR BOOTY.

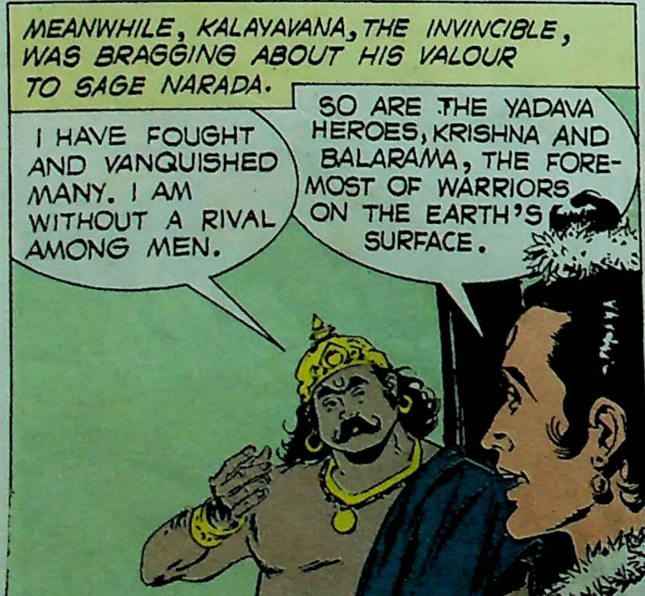
UTTERLY HUMILIATED, JARASANDHA RETURNED TO GIRIVRAJA, HIS CAPITAL.


I WILL NOT GIVE UP. I WILL GO BACK WITH NEW ARMIES AND TEACH THE YADAVAS A LESSON.

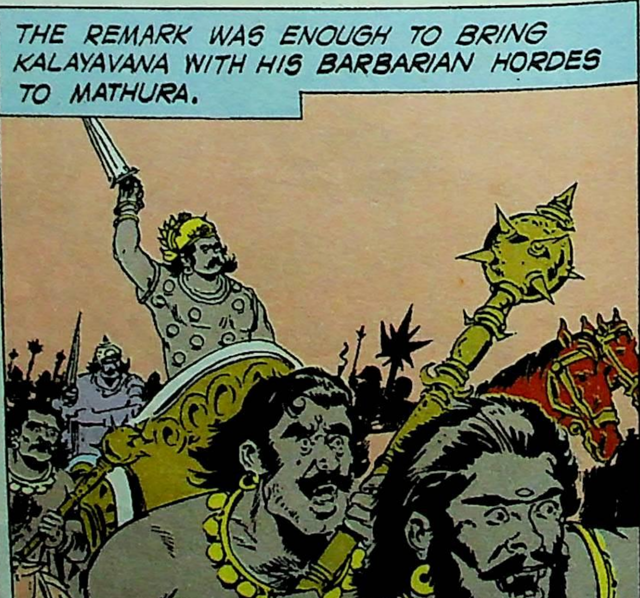
JARASANDHA MADE SEVENTEEN ATTEMPTS TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS SON-IN-LAW AND HIS OWN SUCCESSIVE HUMILIATIONS; AND SEVENTEEN TIMES DID KRISHNA DECIMATE HIS ARMIES, SPARING HIM ALONE.

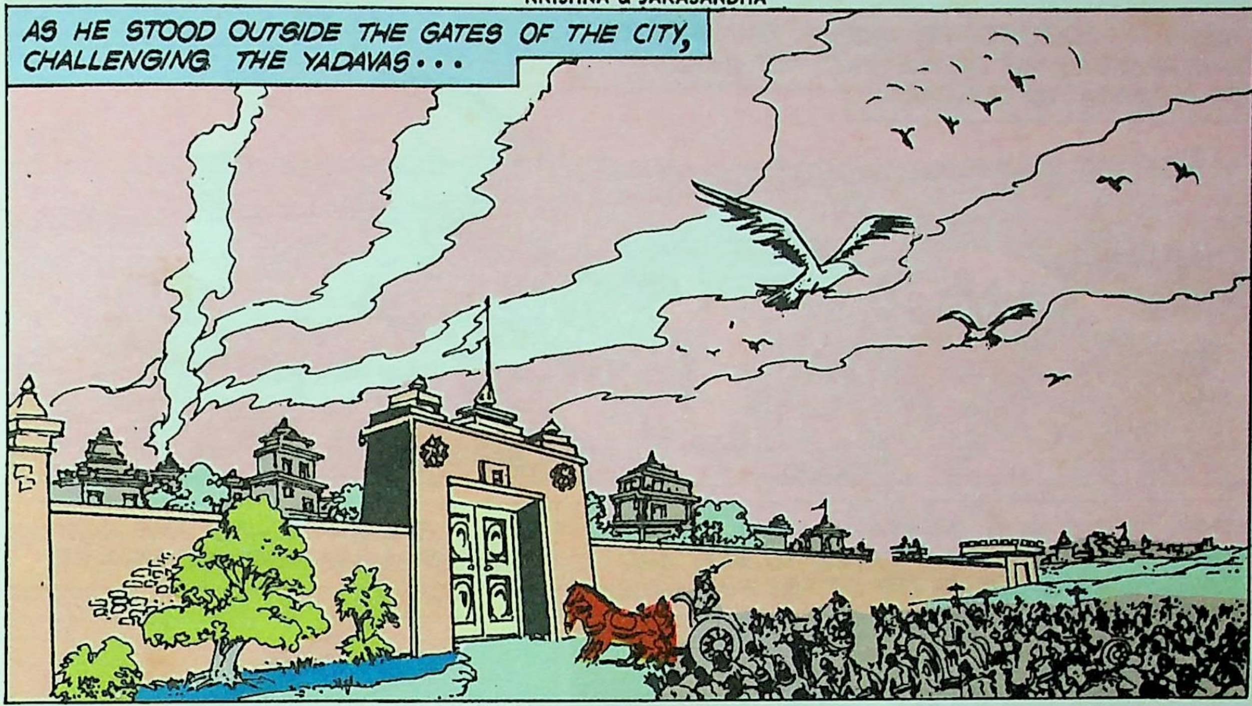


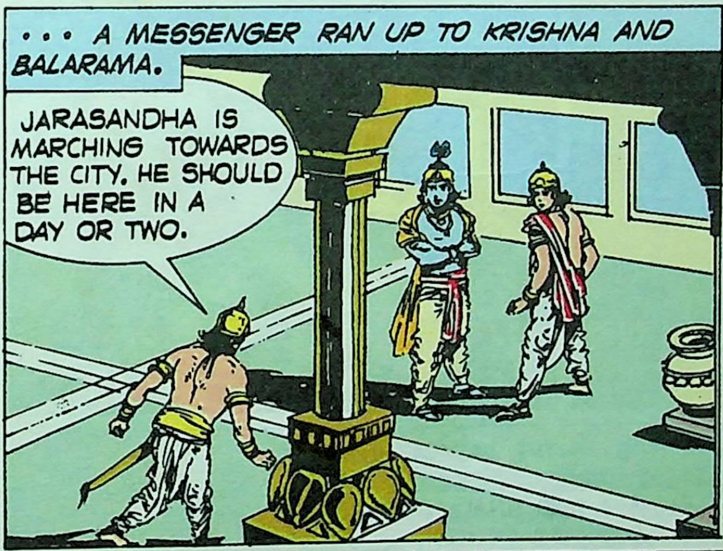
MEANWHILE, KALAYAVANA, THE INVINCIBLE, WAS BRAGGING ABOUT HIS VALOUR TO SAGE NARADA.

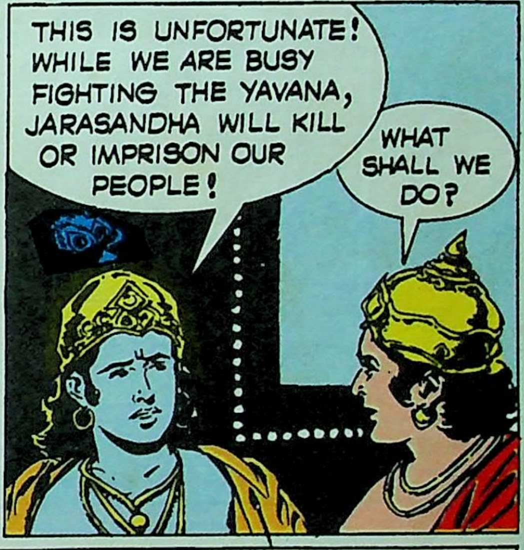

I HAVE FOUGHT AND VANQUISHED MANY. I AM WITHOUT A RIVAL AMONG MEN.
SO ARE THE YADAVA HEROES, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA, THE FOREMOST OF WARRIORS ON THE EARTH'S SURFACE.

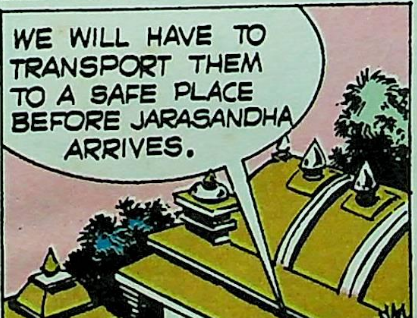
THE REMARK WAS ENOUGH TO BRING KALAYAVANA WITH HIS BARBARIAN HORDES TO MATHURA.

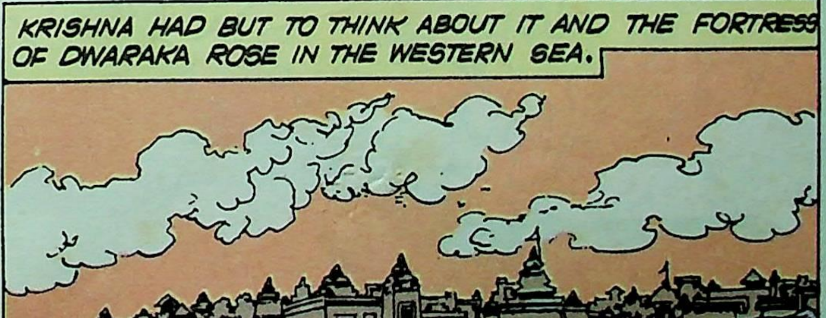


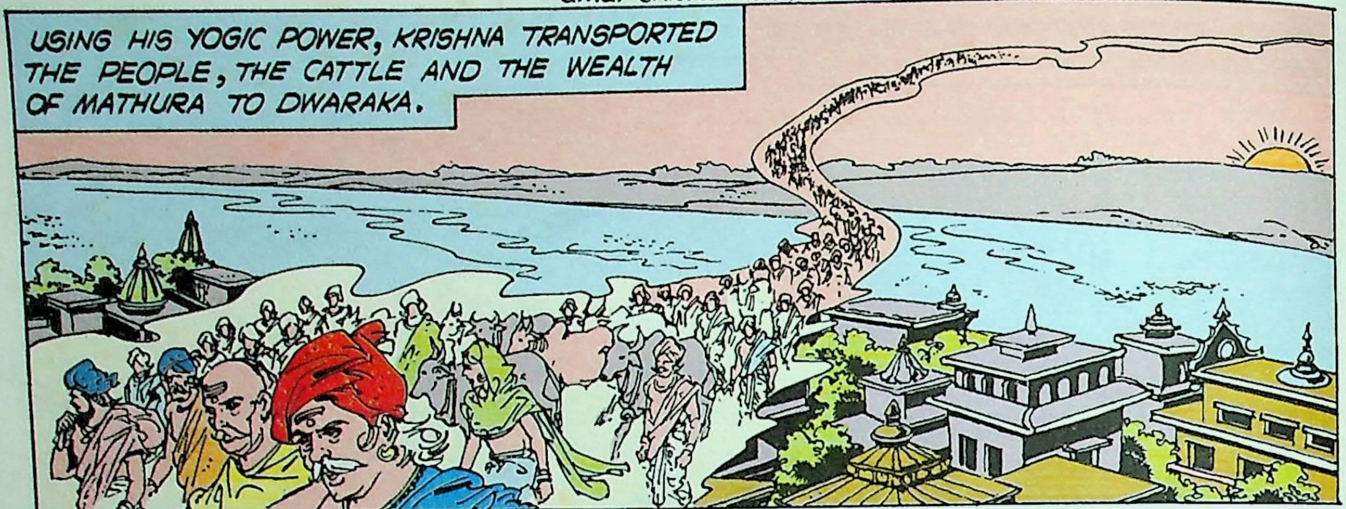

AS HE STOOD OUTSIDE THE GATES OF THE CITY, CHALLENGING THE YADAVAS . . .


. . . A MESSENGER RAN UP TO KRISHNA AND BALARAMA.
JARASANDHA IS MARCHING TOWARDS THE CITY. HE SHOULD BE HERE IN A DAY OR TWO.

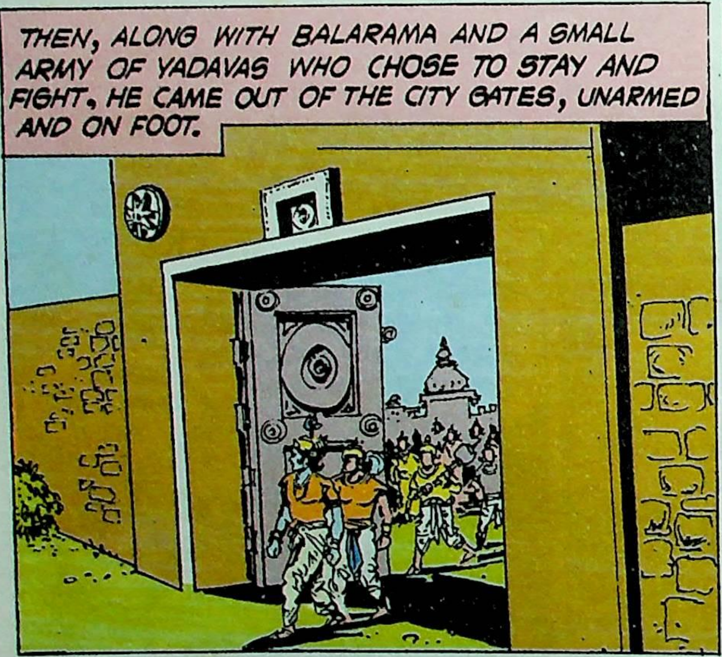

THIS IS UNFORTUNATE! WHILE WE ARE BUSY FIGHTING THE YAVANA, JARASANDHA WILL KILL OR IMPRISON OUR PEOPLE!
WHAT SHALL WE DO?


WE WILL HAVE TO TRANSPORT THEM TO A SAFE PLACE BEFORE JARASANDHA ARRIVES.

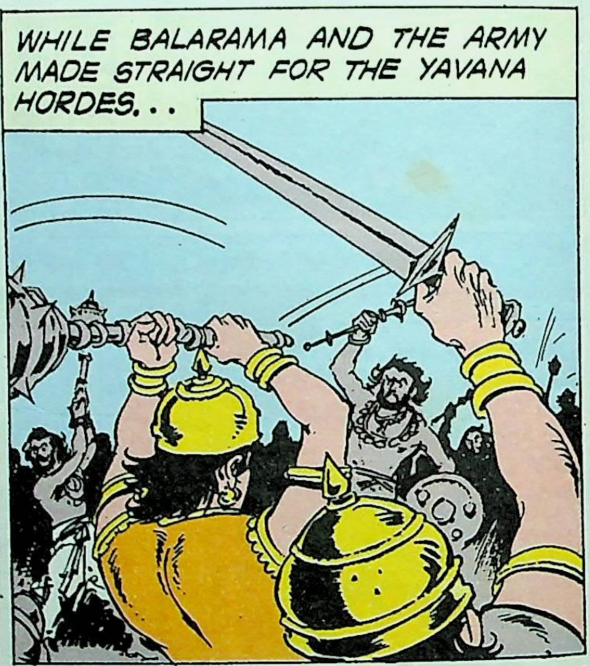

KRISHNA HAD BUT TO THINK ABOUT IT AND THE FORTRESS OF DWARAKA ROSE IN THE WESTERN SEA.



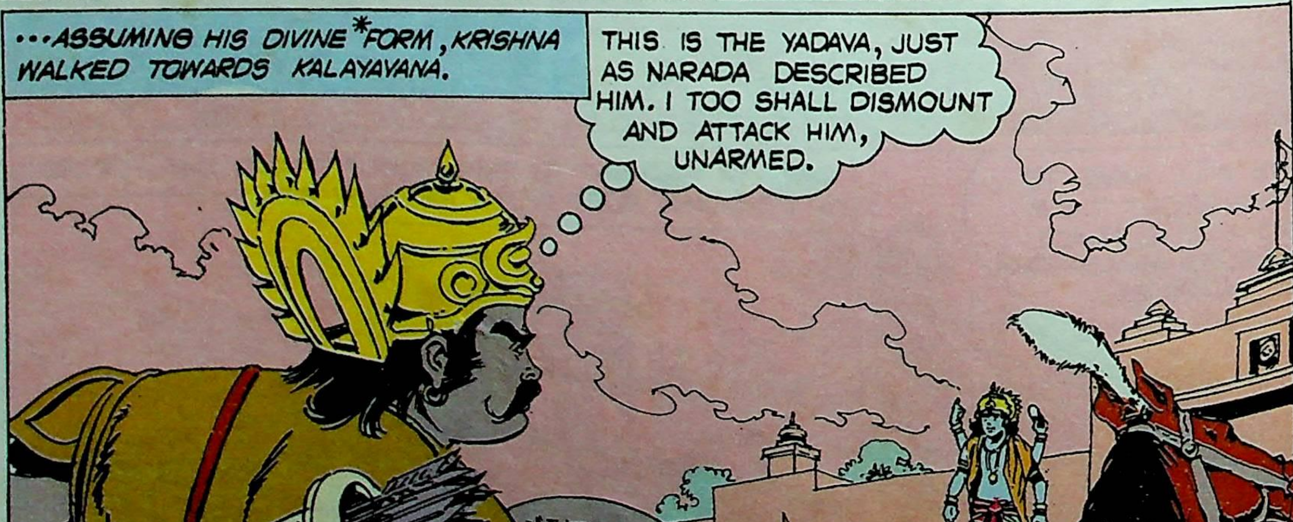
USING HIS YOGIC POWER, KRISHNA TRANSPORTED THE PEOPLE, THE CATTLE AND THE WEALTH OF MATHURA TO DWARAKA.



THEN, ALONG WITH BALARAMA AND A SMALL ARMY OF YADAVAS WHO CHOSE TO STAY AND FIGHT, HE CAME OUT OF THE CITY GATES, UNARMED AND ON FOOT.



WHILE BALARAMA AND THE ARMY MADE STRAIGHT FOR THE YAVANA HORDES. . .



...ASSUMING HIS DIVINE*FORM, KRISHNA WALKED TOWARDS KALAYAVANA.

THIS IS THE YADAVA, JUST AS NARADA DESCRIBED HIM. I TOO SHALL DISMOUNT AND ATTACK HIM, UNARMED.

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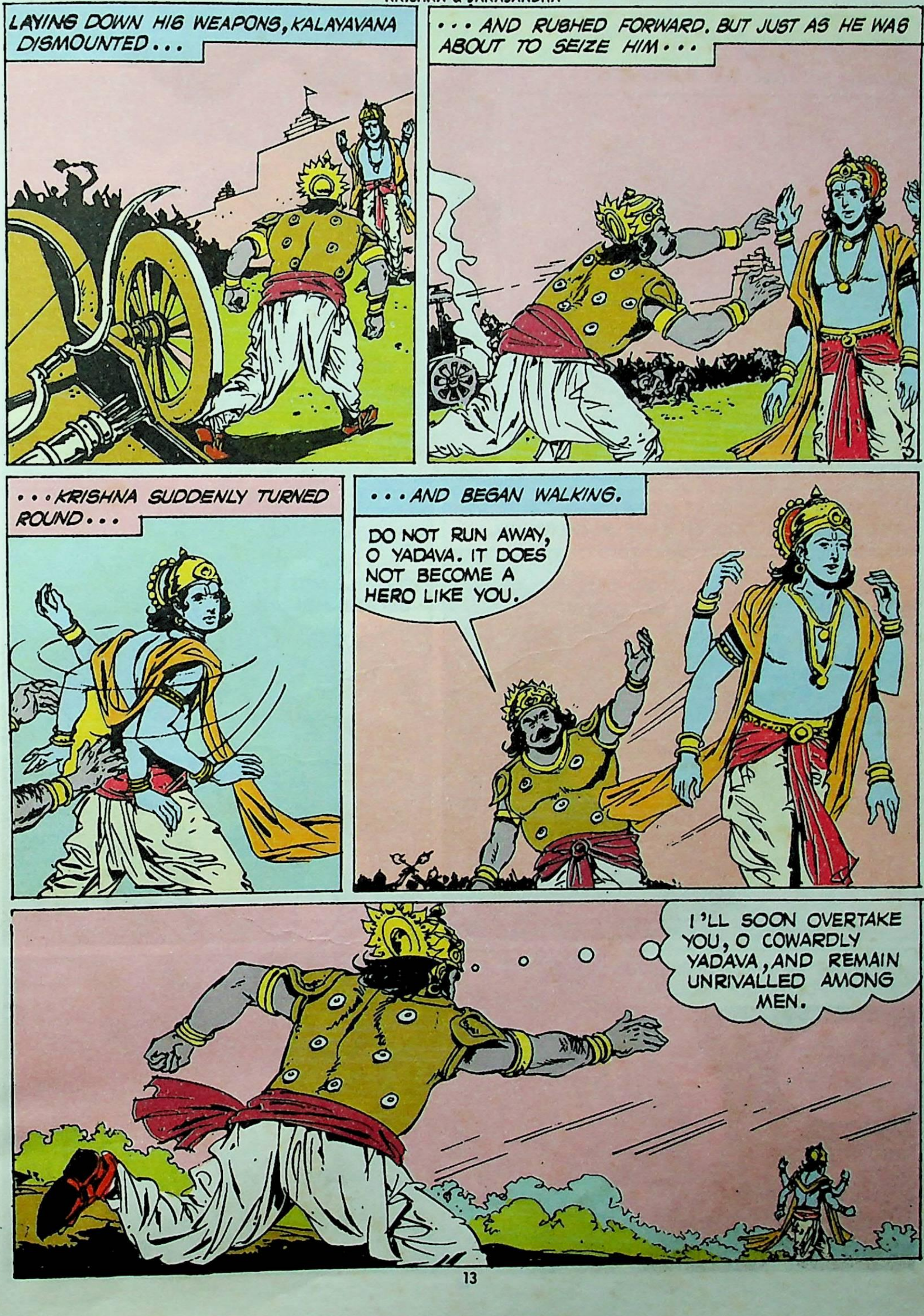
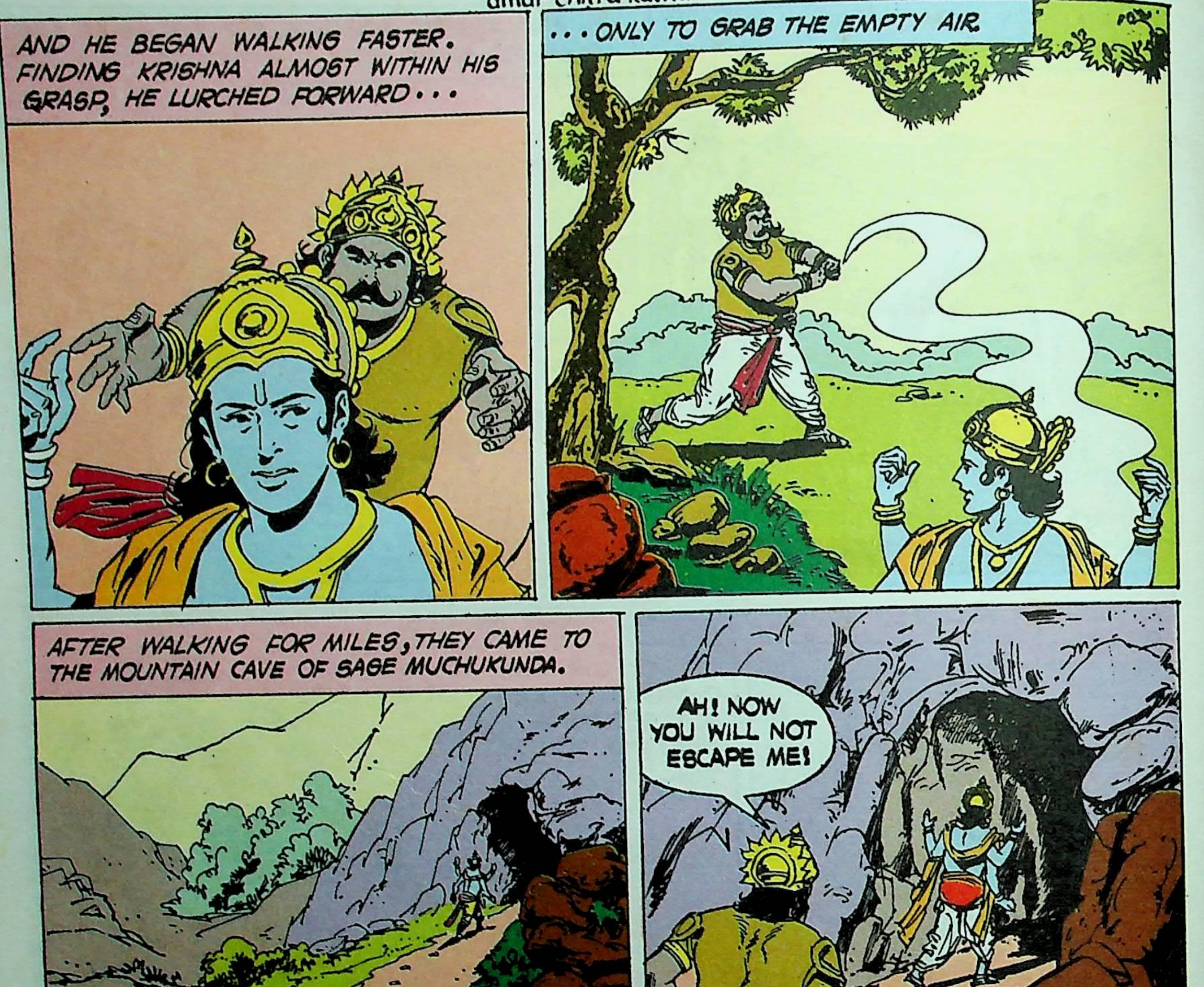
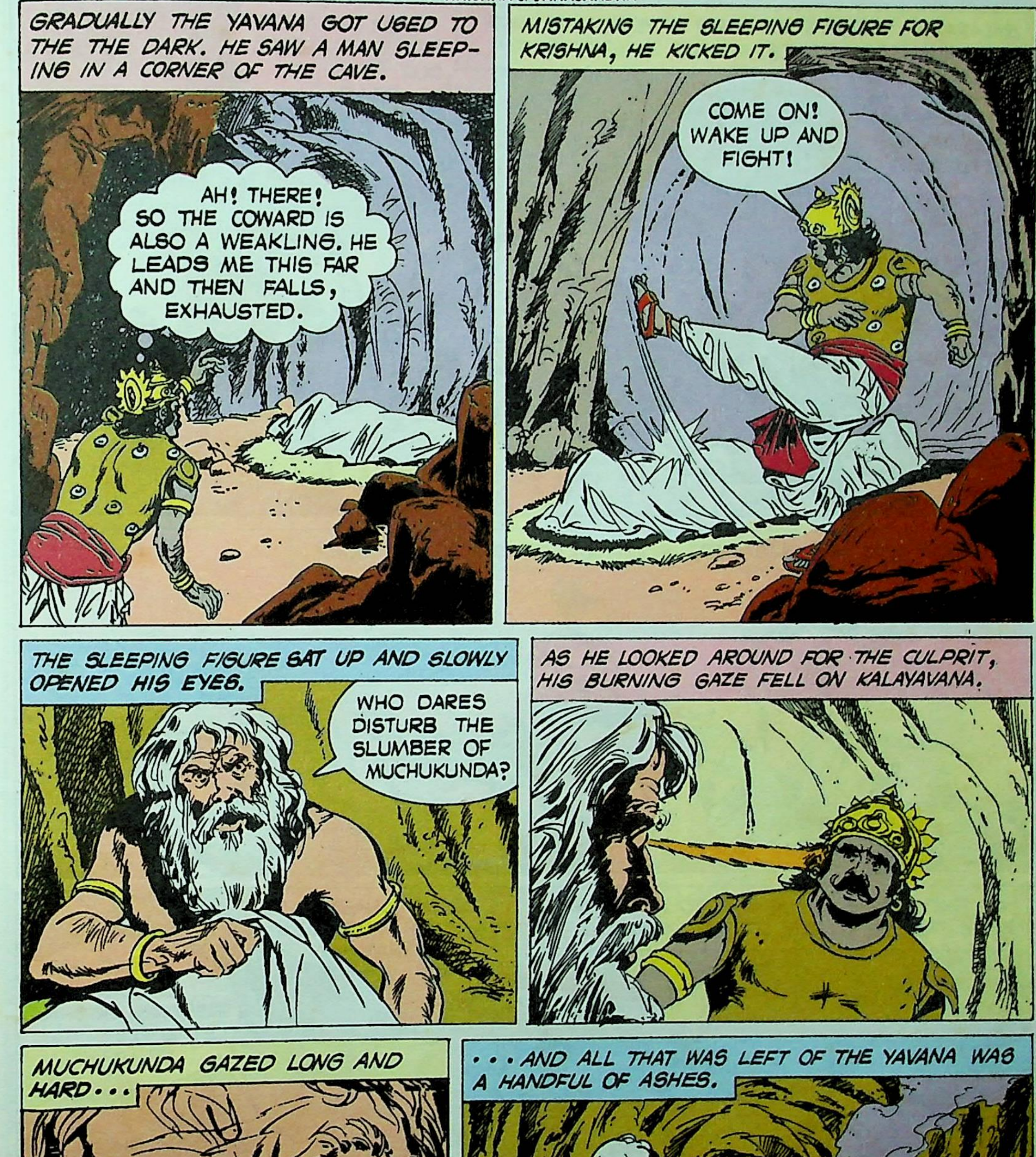
* KRISHNA BEING AN INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU


LAYING DOWN HIS WEAPONS, KALAYAVANA DISMOUNTED . . .
. . . AND RUSHED FORWARD. BUT JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO SEIZE HIM . . .
. . . KRISHNA SUDDENLY TURNED ROUND . . .
. . . AND BEGAN WALKING.
DO NOT RUN AWAY, O YADAVA. IT DOES NOT BECOME A HERO LIKE YOU.
I'LL SOON OVERTAKE YOU, O COWARDLY YADAVA, AND REMAIN UNRIVALLED AMONG MEN.


AND HE BEGAN WALKING FASTER. FINDING KRISHNA ALMOST WITHIN HIS GRASP, HE LURCHED FORWARD . . .
. . . ONLY TO GRAB THE EMPTY AIR.
AFTER WALKING FOR MILES, THEY CAME TO THE MOUNTAIN CAVE OF SAGE MUCHUKUNDA.
AH! NOW YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ME!
GROPING IN THE DARK, THE YAVANA FOLLOWED KRISHNA.
SHOW YOURSELF, O BRAVE YADAVA!



GRADUALLY THE YAVANA GOT USED TO THE THE DARK. HE SAW A MAN SLEEPING IN A CORNER OF THE CAVE.

AH! THERE! SO THE COWARD IS ALSO A WEAKLING. HE LEADS ME THIS FAR AND THEN FALLS, EXHAUSTED.

MISTAKING THE SLEEPING FIGURE FOR KRISHNA, HE KICKED IT.

COME ON! WAKE UP AND FIGHT!

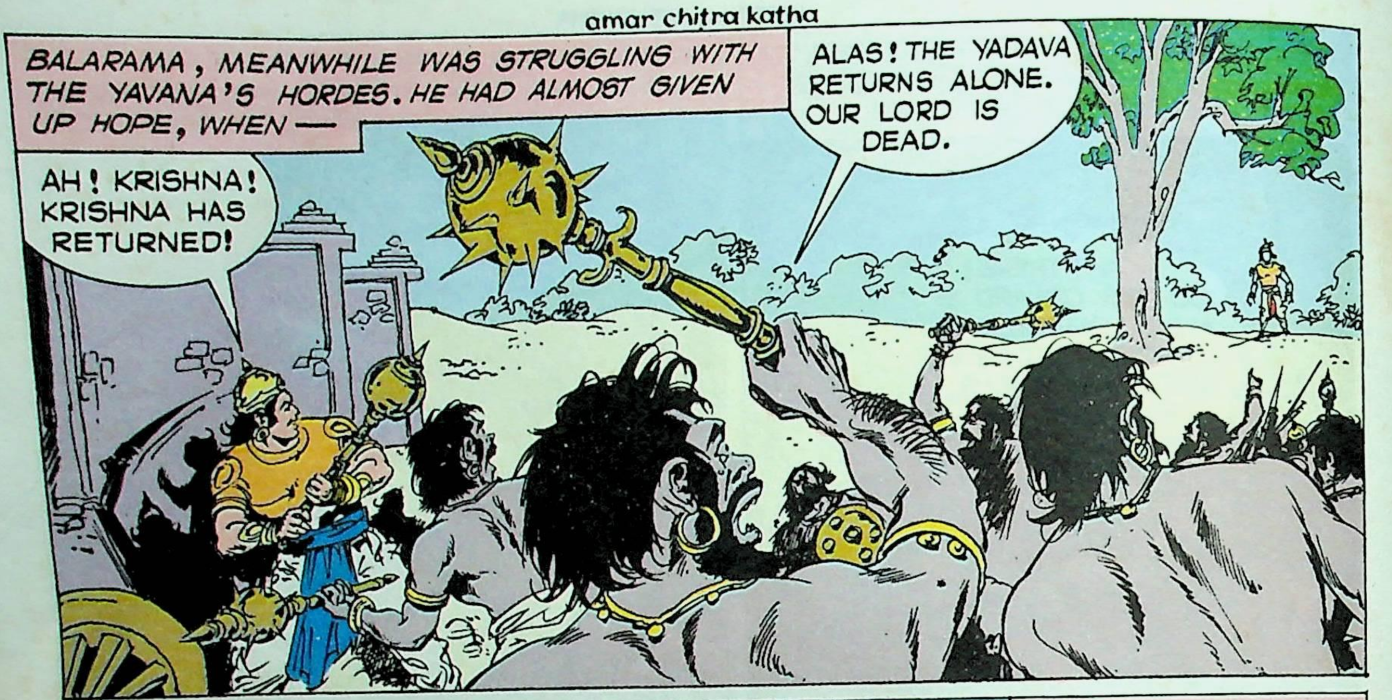
THE SLEEPING FIGURE SAT UP AND SLOWLY OPENED HIS EYES.

WHO DARES DISTURB THE SLUMBER OF MUCHUKUNDA?

AS HE LOOKED AROUND FOR THE CULPRIT, HIS BURNING GAZE FELL ON KALAYAVANA.

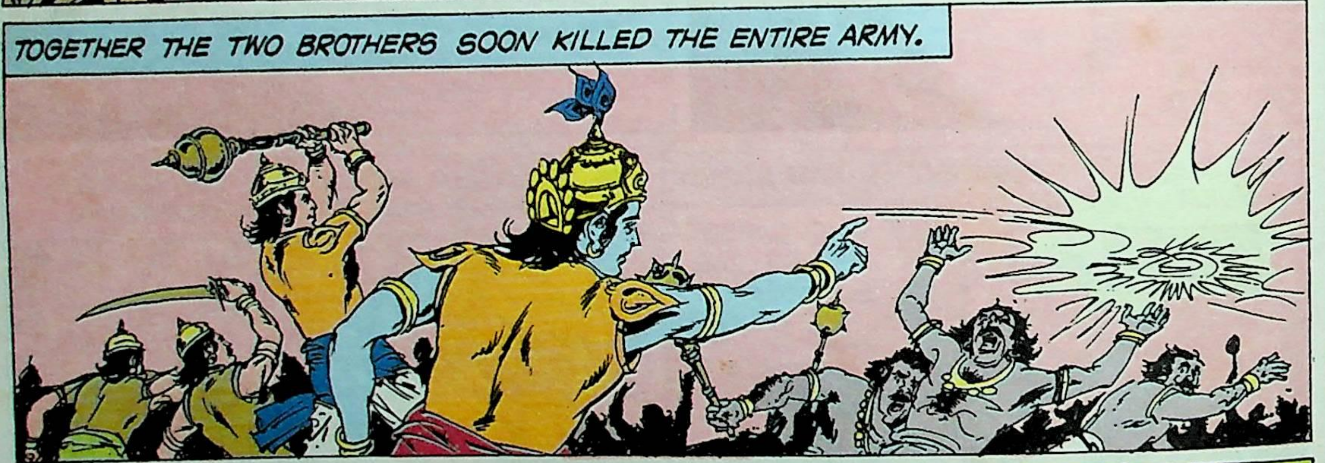
MUCHUKUNDA GAZED LONG AND HARD...

... AND ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF THE YAVANA WAS A HANDFUL OF ASHES.

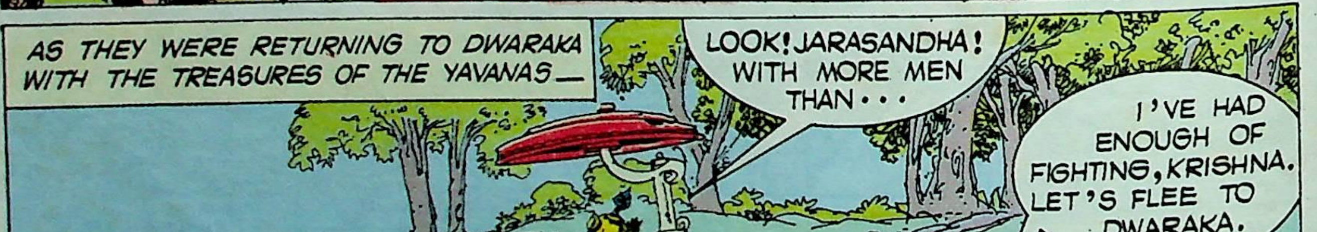


BALARAMA, MEANWHILE WAS STRUGGLING WITH THE YAVANA'S HORDES. HE HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP HOPE, WHEN —

ALAS! THE YADAVA RETURNS ALONE. OUR LORD IS DEAD.
AH! KRISHNA! KRISHNA HAS RETURNED!



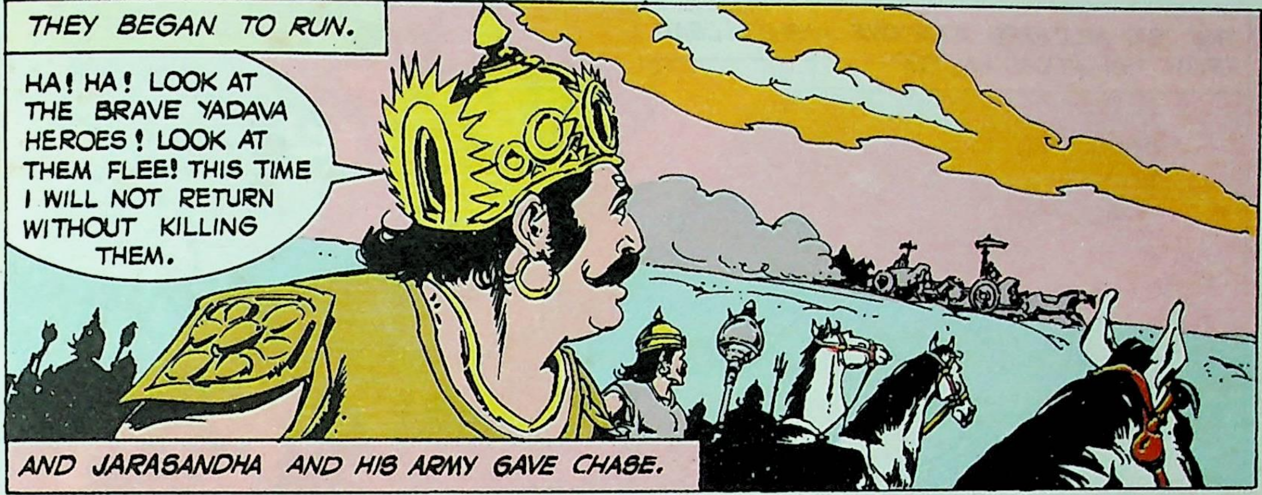
TOGETHER THE TWO BROTHERS SOON KILLED THE ENTIRE ARMY.



AS THEY WERE RETURNING TO DWARAKA WITH THE TREASURES OF THE YAVANAS —

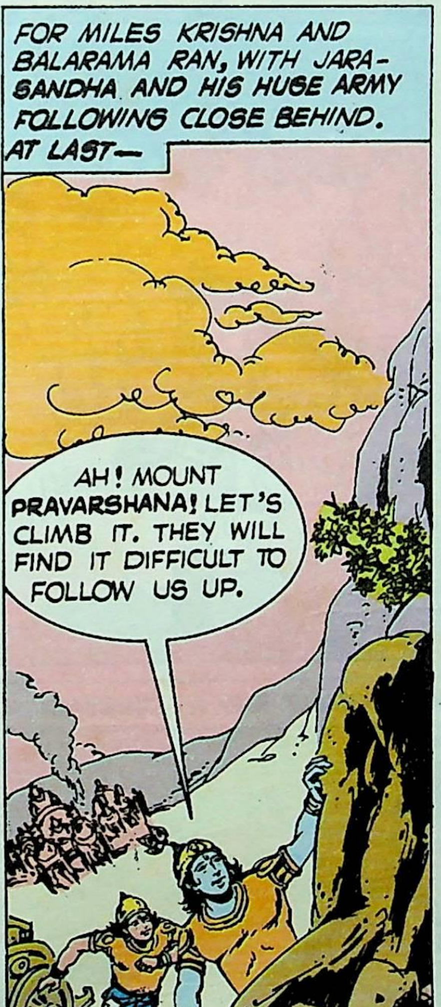
LOOK! JARASANDHA! WITH MORE MEN THAN . . .
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF FIGHTING, KRISHNA. LET'S FLEE TO DWARAKA.

THEY BEGAN TO RUN.

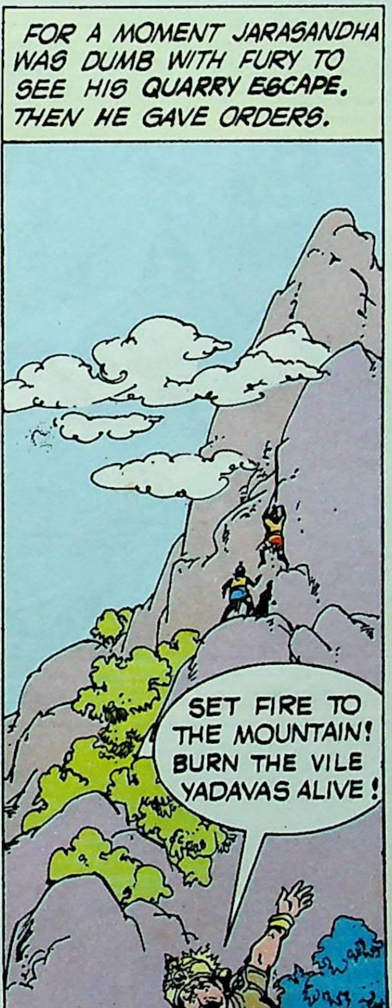

HA! HA! LOOK AT THE BRAVE YADAVA HEROES! LOOK AT THEM FLEE! THIS TIME I WILL NOT RETURN WITHOUT KILLING THEM.

AND JARASANDHA AND HIS ARMY GAVE CHASE.

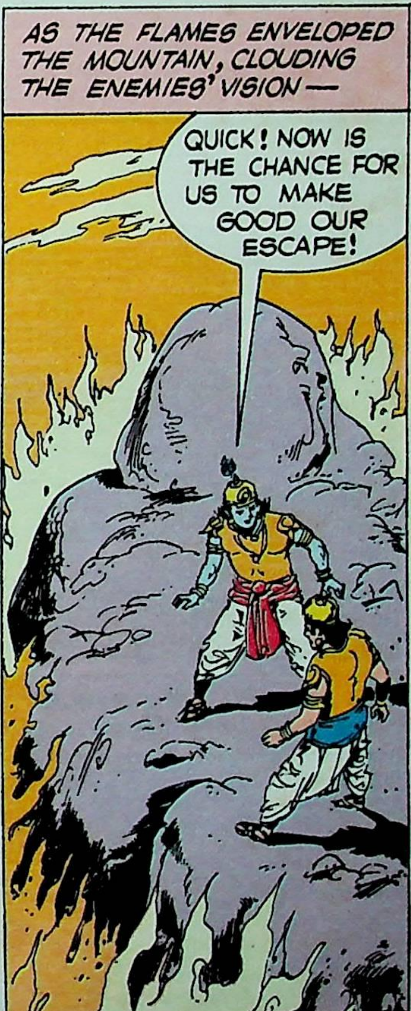
FOR MILES KRISHNA AND BALARAMA RAN, WITH JARASANDHA AND HIS HUGE ARMY FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND. AT LAST—

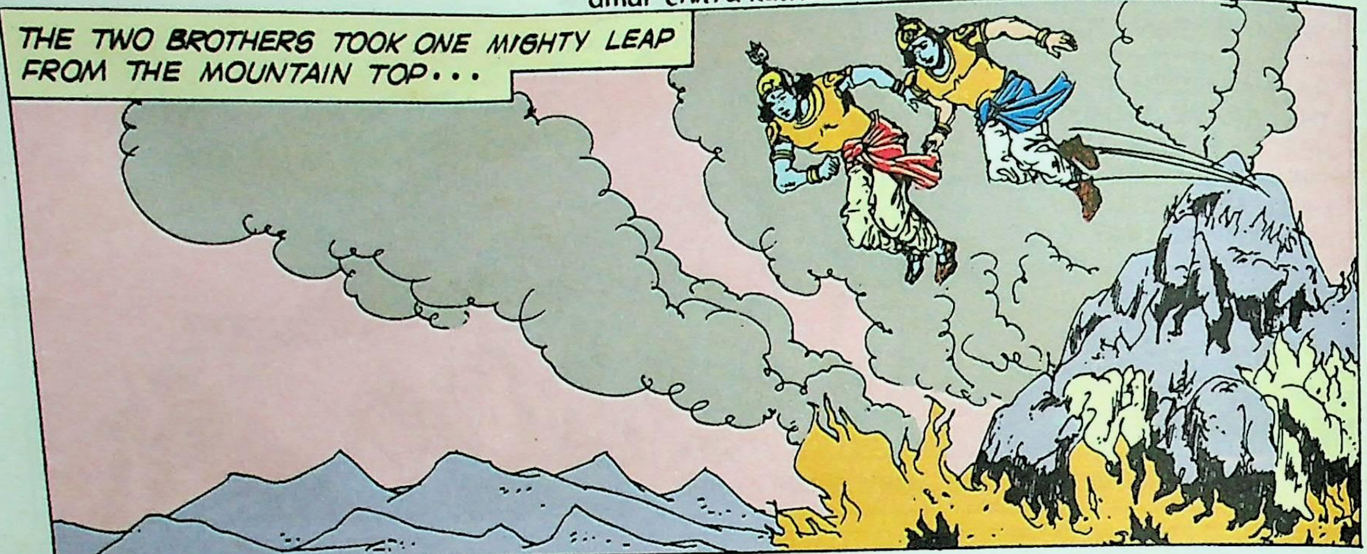

AH! MOUNT **PRAVARSHANA!** LET'S CLIMB IT. THEY WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW US UP.

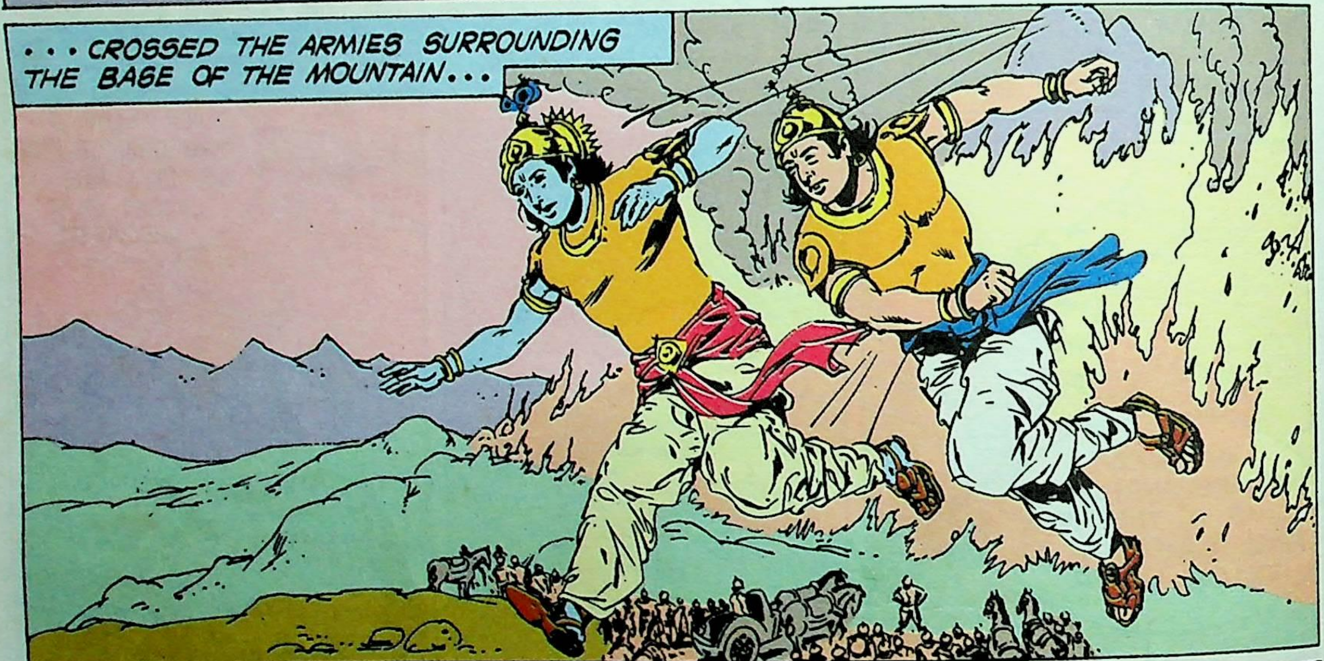
FOR A MOMENT JARASANDHA WAS DUMB WITH FURY TO SEE HIS **QUARRY ESCAPE.** THEN HE GAVE ORDERS.

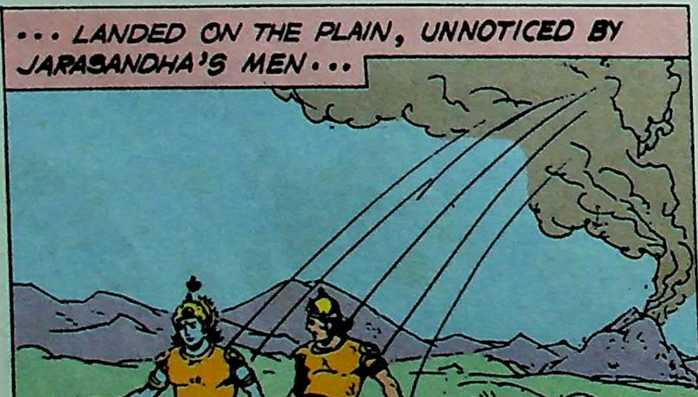

SET FIRE TO THE MOUNTAIN! BURN THE VILE YADAVAS ALIVE!

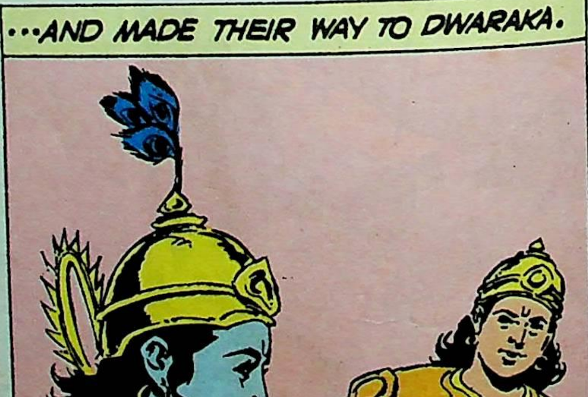
AS THE FLAMES ENVELOPED THE MOUNTAIN, CLOUDING THE ENEMIES' VISION—

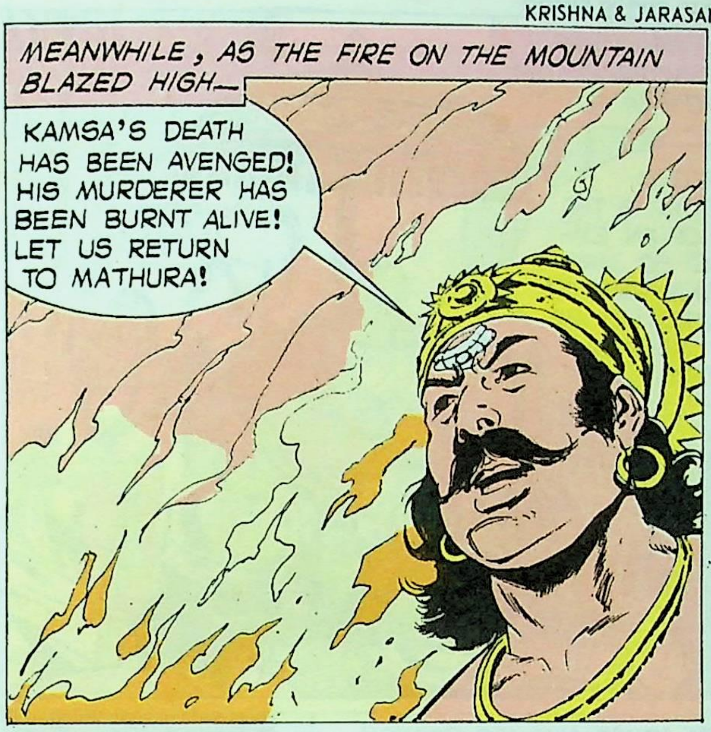

QUICK! NOW IS THE CHANCE FOR US TO MAKE GOOD OUR ESCAPE!

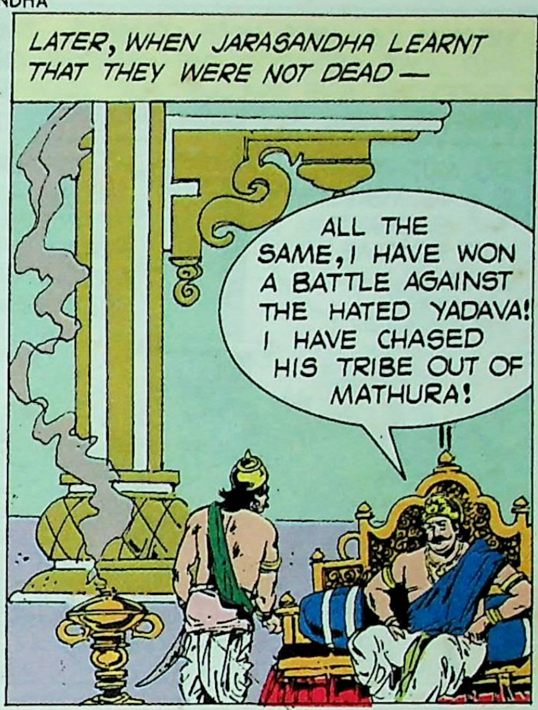

THE TWO BROTHERS TOOK ONE MIGHTY LEAP FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP...

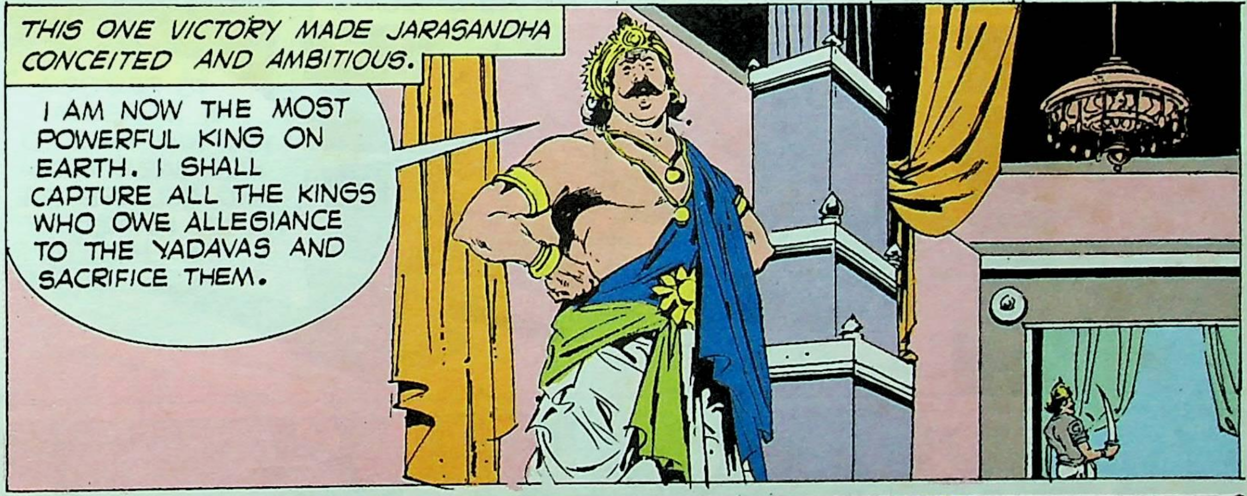

...CROSSED THE ARMIES SURROUNDING THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN...

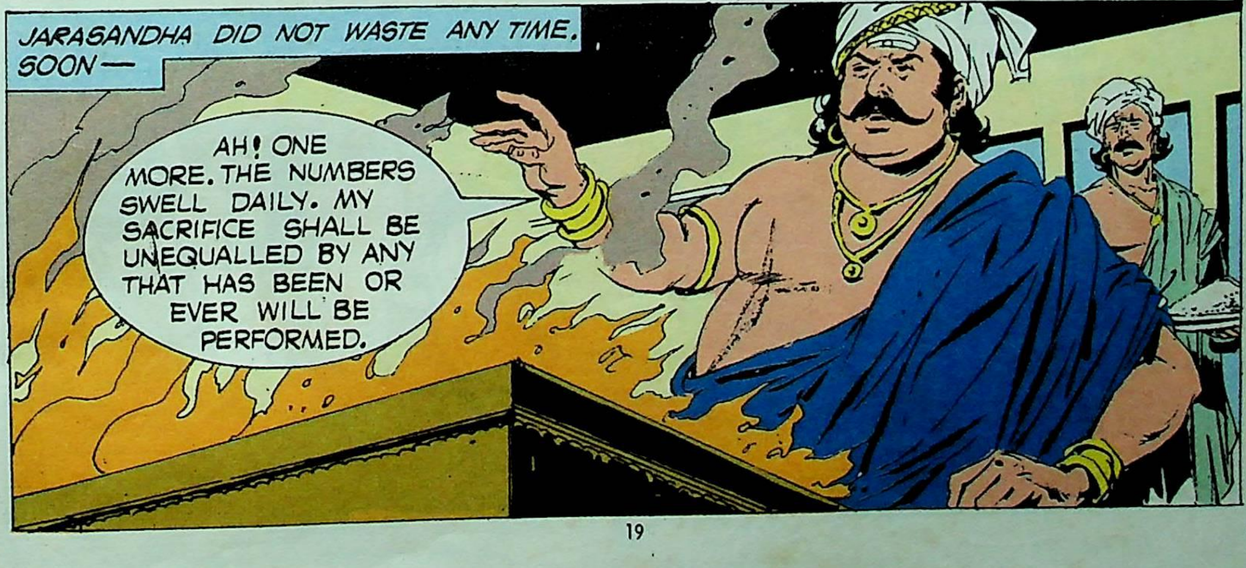

...LANDED ON THE PLAIN, UNNOTICED BY JARASANDHA'S MEN...

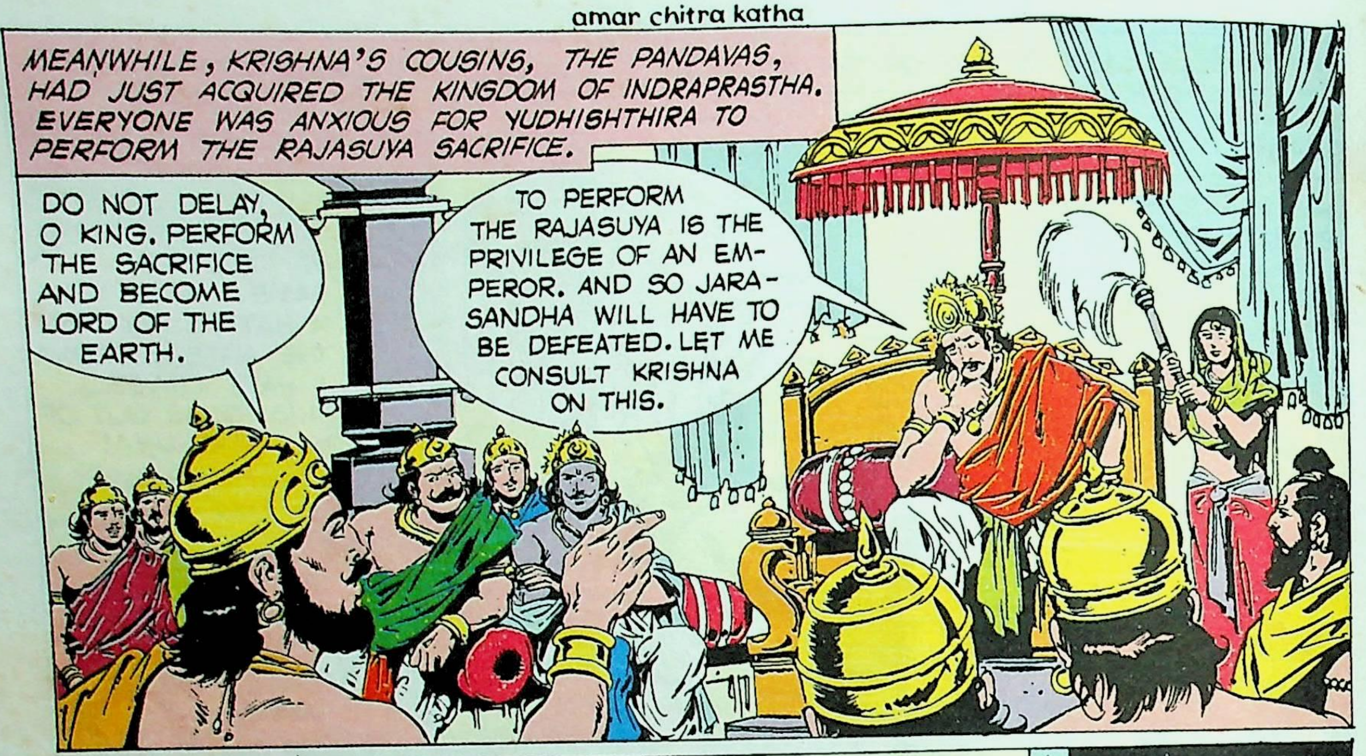

...AND MADE THEIR WAY TO DWARAKA.

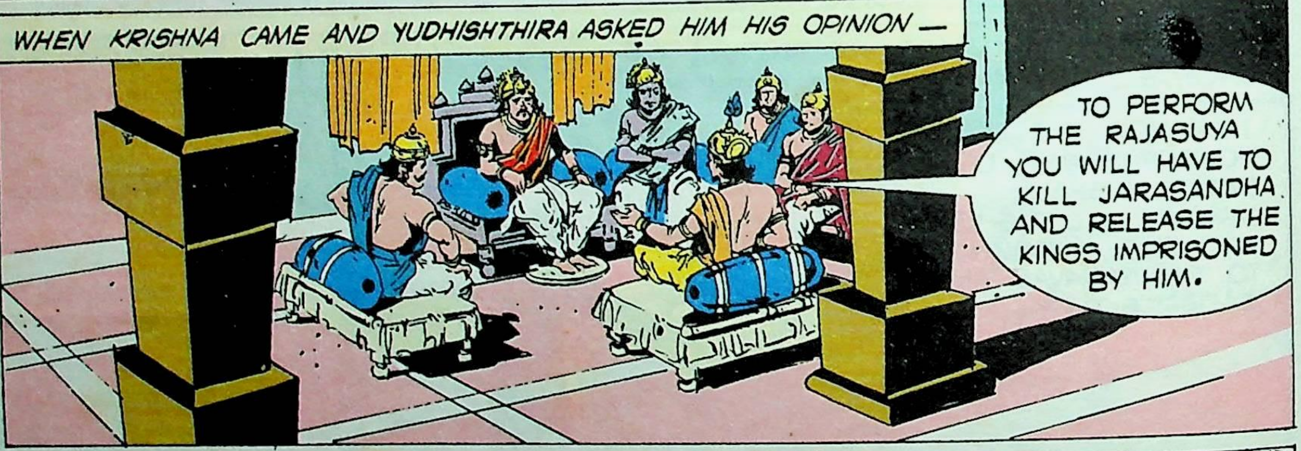

MEANWHILE, AS THE FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN BLAZED HIGH—
KAMSA'S DEATH HAS BEEN AVENGED! HIS MURDERER HAS BEEN BURNT ALIVE! LET US RETURN TO MATHURA!

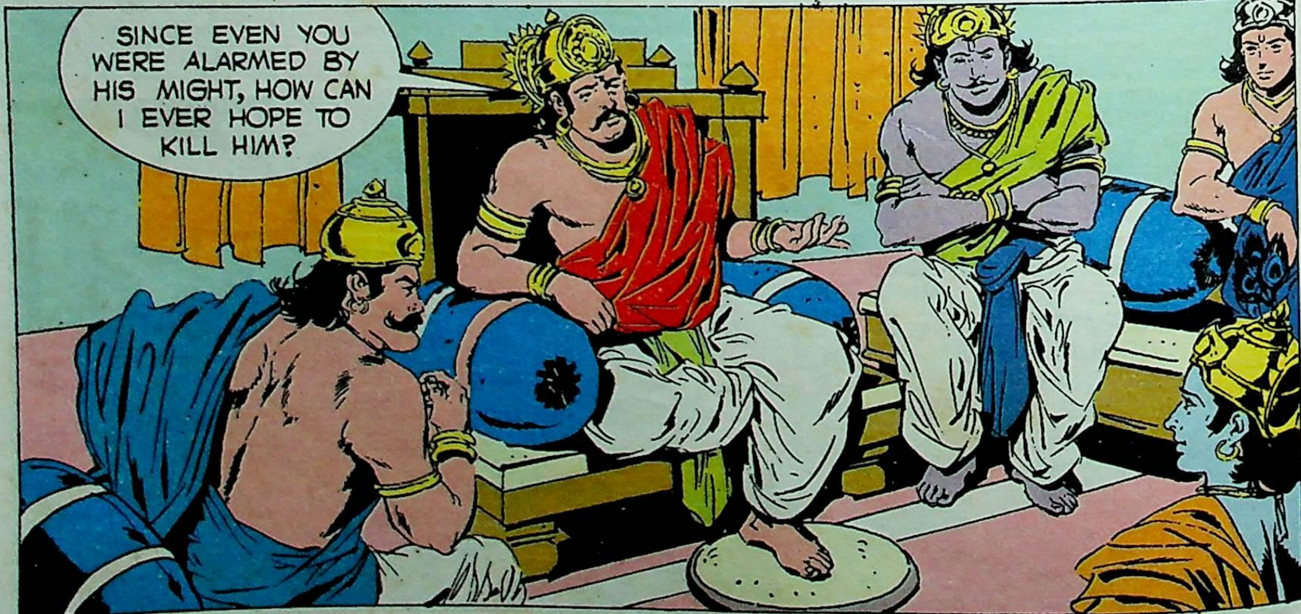

LATER, WHEN JARASANDHA LEARNT THAT THEY WERE NOT DEAD —
ALL THE SAME, I HAVE WON A BATTLE AGAINST THE HATED YADAVA! I HAVE CHASED HIS TRIBE OUT OF MATHURA!

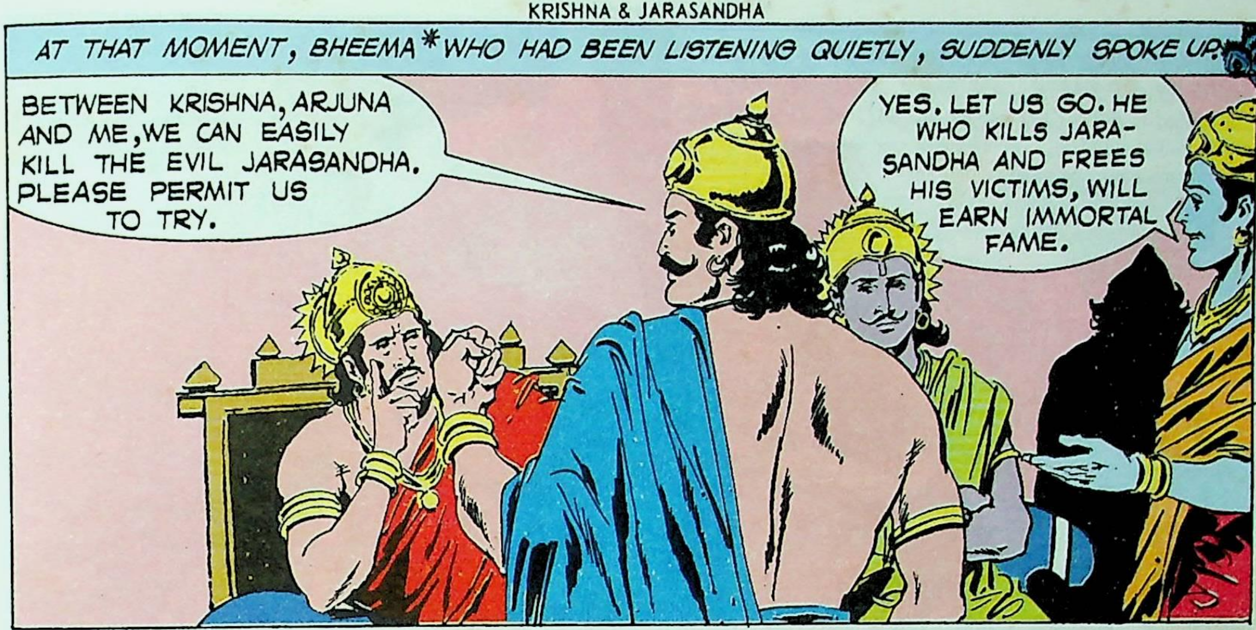

THIS ONE VICTORY MADE JARASANDHA CONCEITED AND AMBITIOUS.
I AM NOW THE MOST POWERFUL KING ON EARTH. I SHALL CAPTURE ALL THE KINGS WHO OWE ALLEGIANCE TO THE YADAVAS AND SACRIFICE THEM.

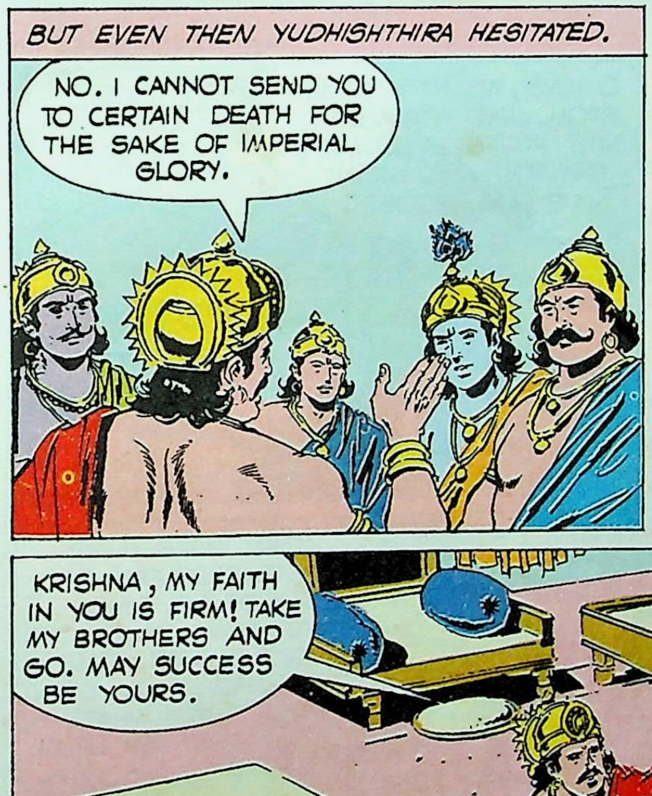

JARASANDHA DID NOT WASTE ANY TIME. SOON—
AH! ONE MORE. THE NUMBERS SWELL DAILY. MY SACRIFICE SHALL BE UNEQUALLED BY ANY THAT HAS BEEN OR EVER WILL BE PERFORMED.

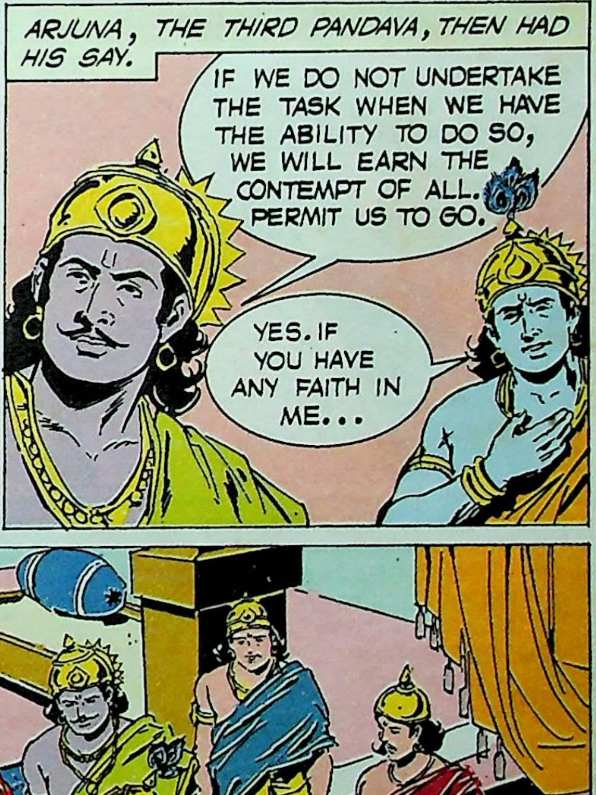

MEANWHILE, KRISHNA'S COUSINS, THE PANDAVAS, HAD JUST ACQUIRED THE KINGDOM OF INDRAPRASTHA. EVERYONE WAS ANXIOUS FOR YUDHISHTHIRA TO PERFORM THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE.
DO NOT DELAY, O KING. PERFORM THE SACRIFICE AND BECOME LORD OF THE EARTH.
TO PERFORM THE RAJASUYA IS THE PRIVILEGE OF AN EMPEROR. AND SO JARASANDHA WILL HAVE TO BE DEFEATED. LET ME CONSULT KRISHNA ON THIS.

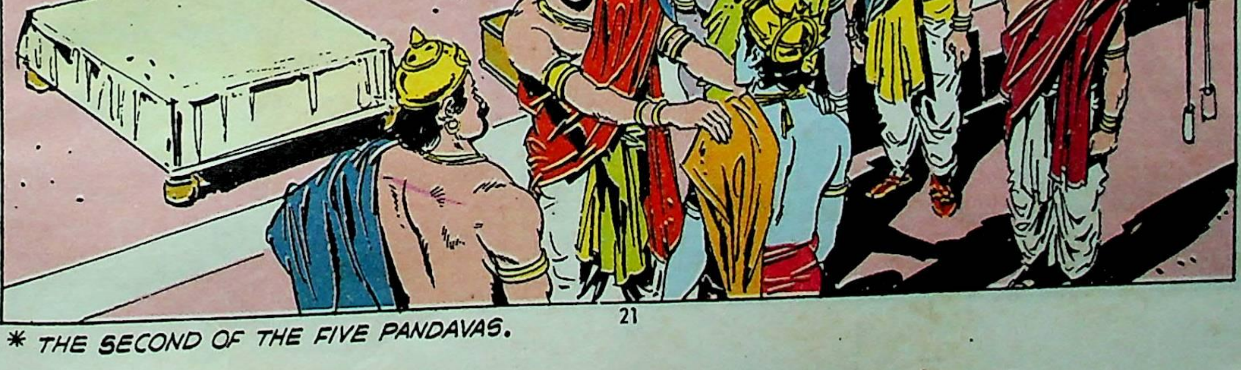

WHEN KRISHNA CAME AND YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED HIM HIS OPINION —
TO PERFORM THE RAJASUYA YOU WILL HAVE TO KILL JARASANDHA AND RELEASE THE KINGS IMPRISONED BY HIM.


SINCE EVEN YOU WERE ALARMED BY HIS MIGHT, HOW CAN I EVER HOPE TO KILL HIM?

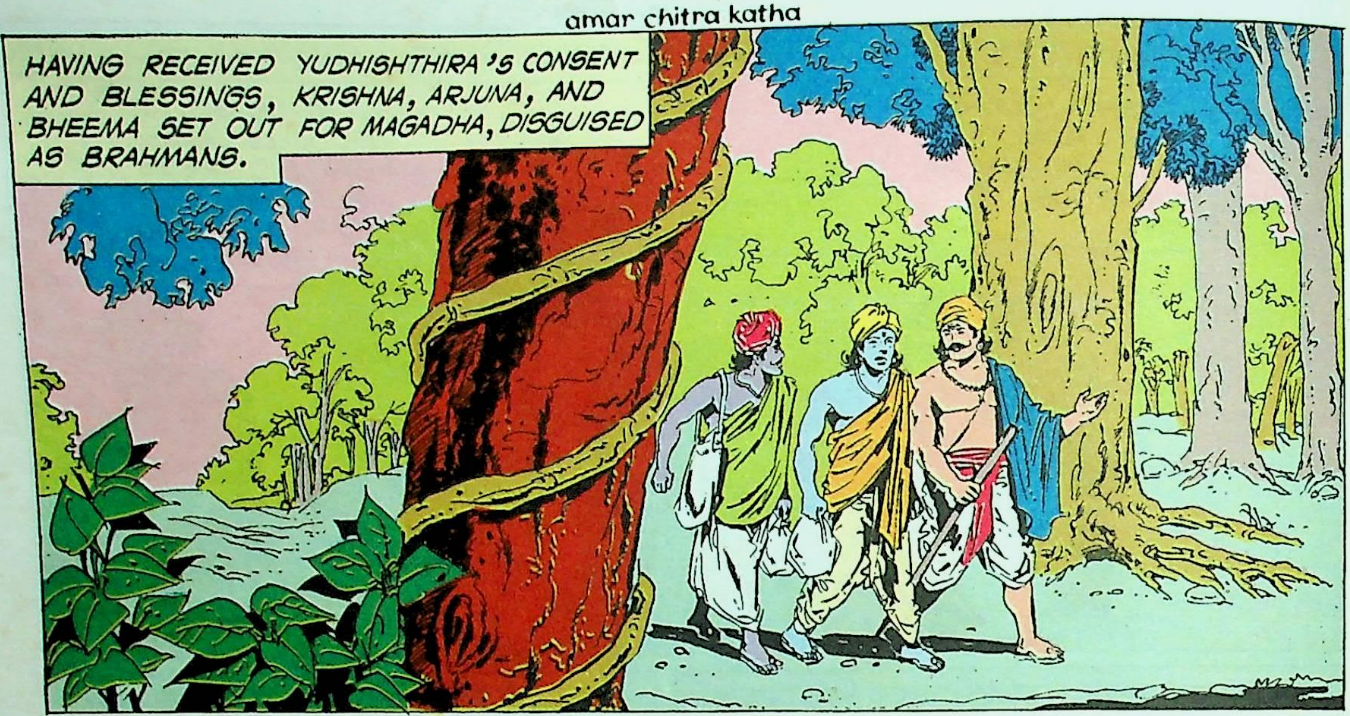

AT THAT MOMENT, BHEEMA* WHO HAD BEEN LISTENING QUIETLY, SUDDENLY SPOKE UP.
BETWEEN KRISHNA, ARJUNA AND ME, WE CAN EASILY KILL THE EVIL JARASANDHA. PLEASE PERMIT US TO TRY.
YES. LET US GO. HE WHO KILLS JARASANDHA AND FREES HIS VICTIMS, WILL EARN IMMORTAL FAME.

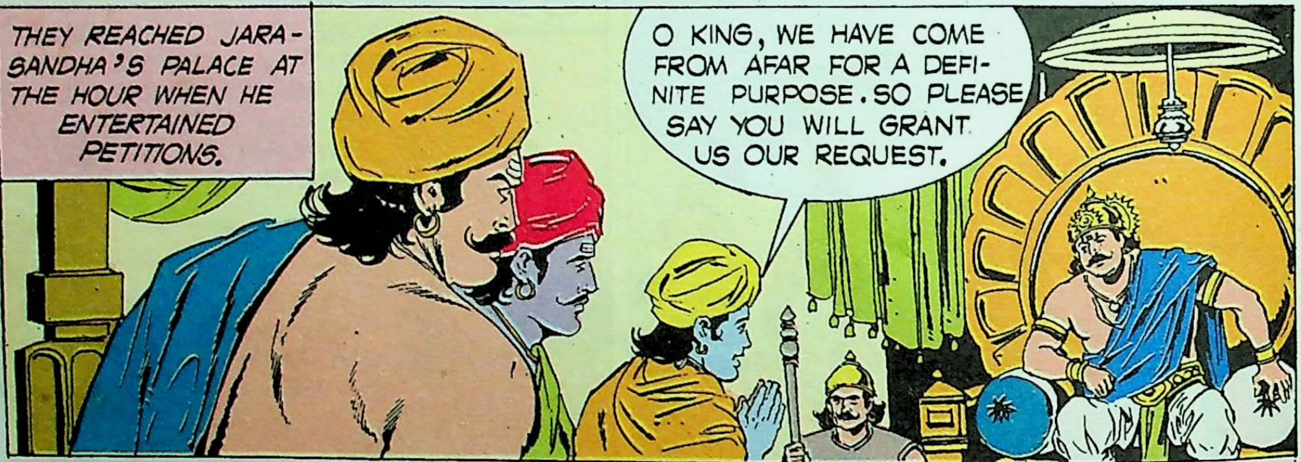

BUT EVEN THEN YUDHISHTHIRA HESITATED.
NO. I CANNOT SEND YOU TO CERTAIN DEATH FOR THE SAKE OF IMPERIAL GLORY.

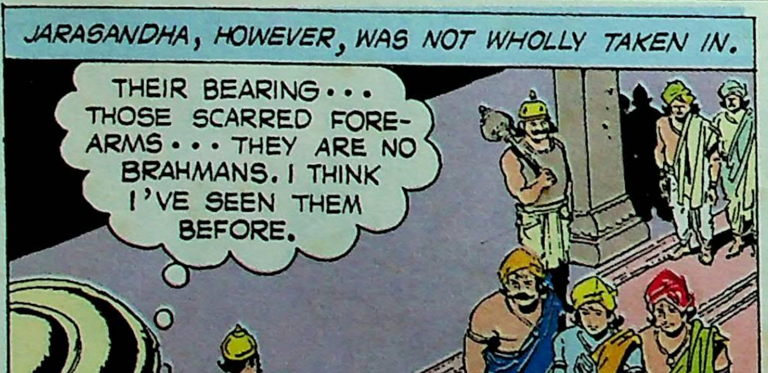

ARJUNA, THE THIRD PANDAVA, THEN HAD HIS SAY.
IF WE DO NOT UNDERTAKE THE TASK WHEN WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO SO, WE WILL EARN THE CONTEMPT OF ALL. PERMIT US TO GO.
YES. IF YOU HAVE ANY FAITH IN ME...

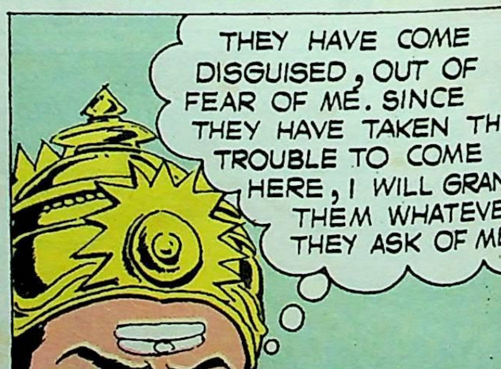

KRISHNA, MY FAITH IN YOU IS FIRM! TAKE MY BROTHERS AND GO. MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS.

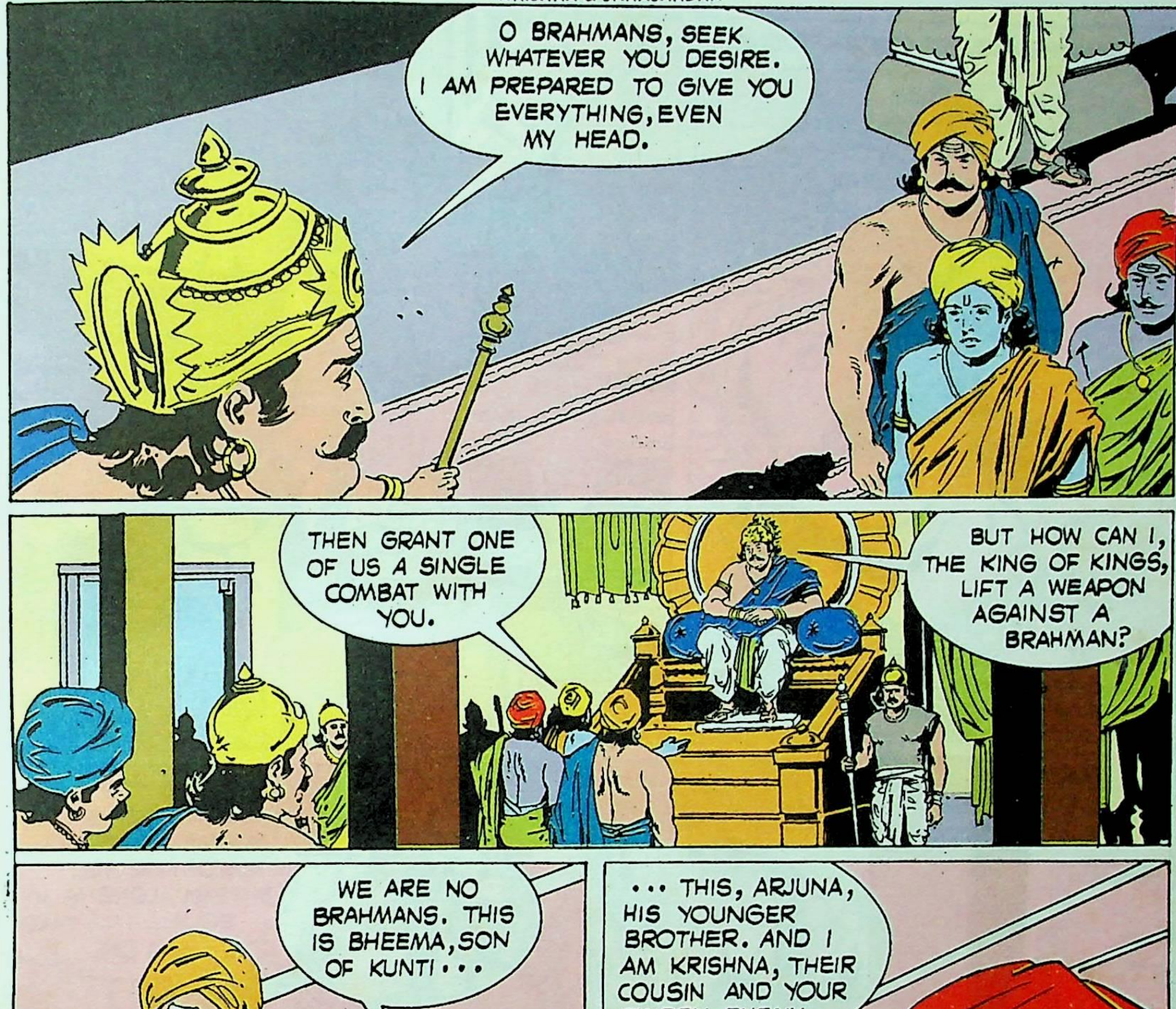
* THE SECOND OF THE FIVE PANDAVAS.


HAVING RECEIVED YUDHISHTHIRA'S CONSENT AND BLESSINGS, KRISHNA, ARJUNA, AND BHEEMA SET OUT FOR MAGADHA, DISGUISED AS BRAHMANS.

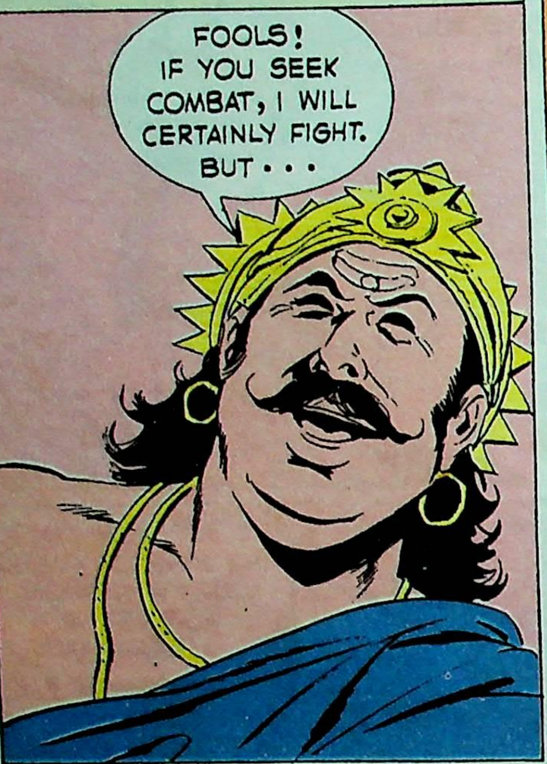

THEY REACHED JARASANDHA'S PALACE AT THE HOUR WHEN HE ENTERTAINED PETITIONS.
O KING, WE HAVE COME FROM AFAR FOR A DEFINITE PURPOSE. SO PLEASE SAY YOU WILL GRANT US OUR REQUEST.

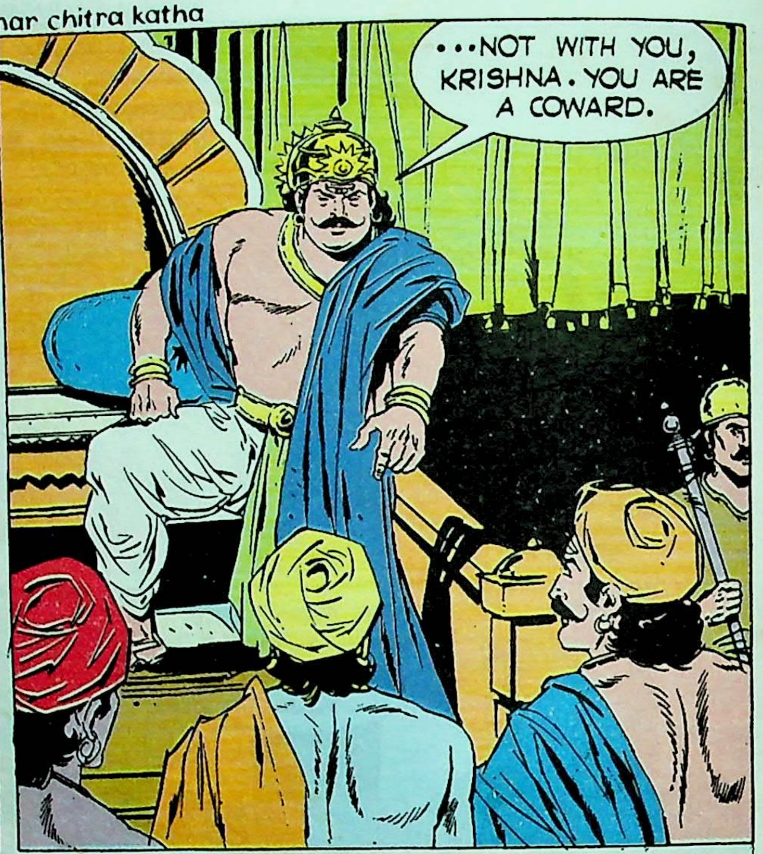

JARASANDHA, HOWEVER, WAS NOT WHOLLY TAKEN IN.
THEIR BEARING... THOSE SCARRED FOREARMS... THEY ARE NO BRAHMANS. I THINK I'VE SEEN THEM BEFORE.

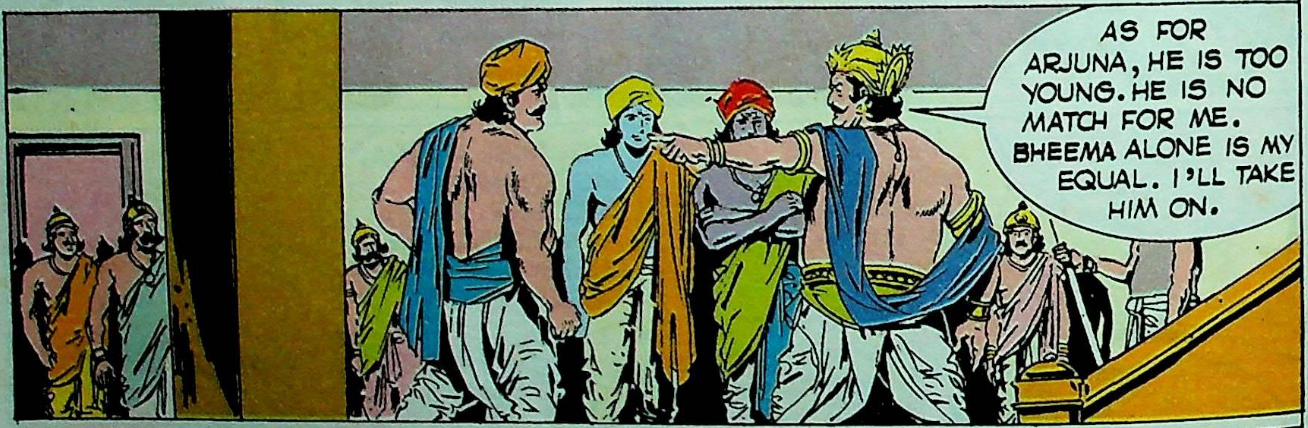

THEY HAVE COME DISGUISED, OUT OF FEAR OF ME. SINCE THEY HAVE TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO COME HERE, I WILL GRANT THEM WHATEVER THEY ASK OF ME.


O BRAHMANS, SEEK WHATEVER YOU DESIRE. I AM PREPARED TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING, EVEN MY HEAD.
THEN GRANT ONE OF US A SINGLE COMBAT WITH YOU.
BUT HOW CAN I, THE KING OF KINGS, LIFT A WEAPON AGAINST A BRAHMAN?
WE ARE NO BRAHMANS. THIS IS BHEEMA, SON OF KUNTI • • •
• • • THIS, ARJUNA, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. AND I AM KRISHNA, THEIR COUSIN AND YOUR SWORN ENEMY.

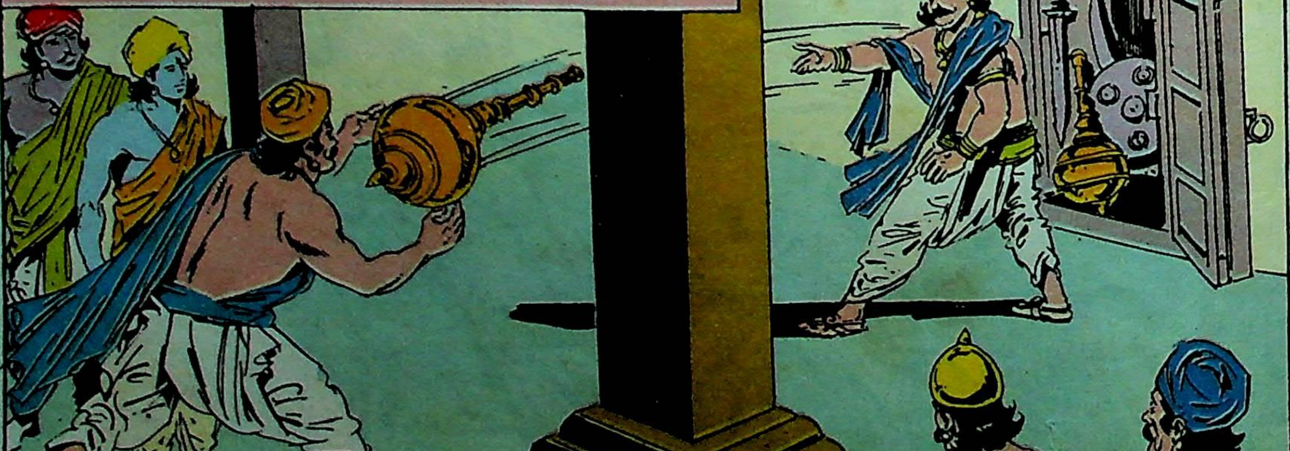
JARASANDHA LAUGHED CONTEMPTUOUSLY.

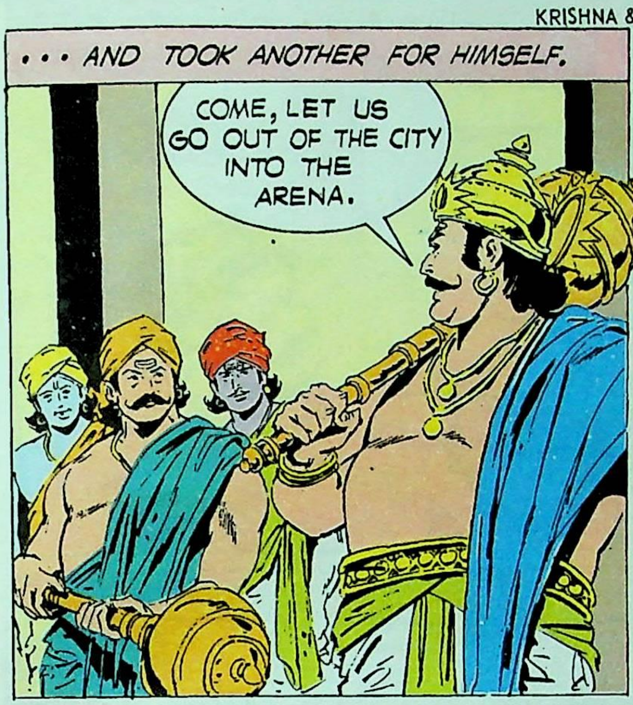

FOOLS! IF YOU SEEK COMBAT, I WILL CERTAINLY FIGHT. BUT . . .

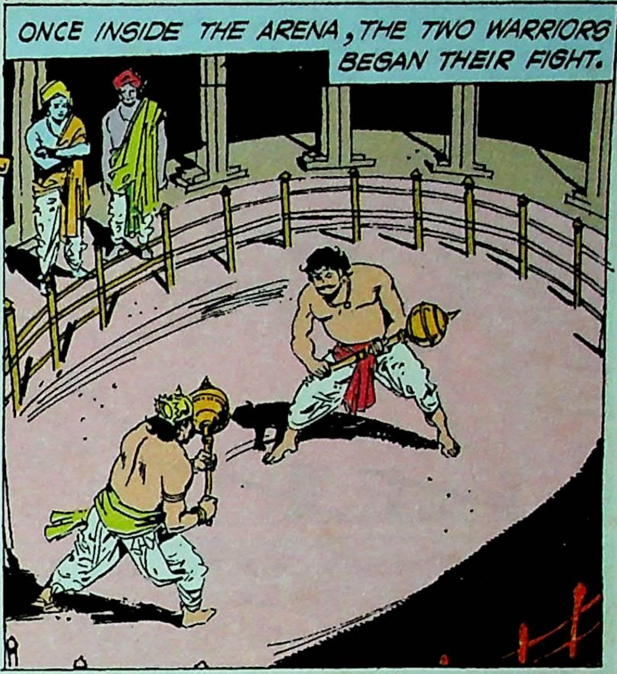

. . . NOT WITH YOU, KRISHNA. YOU ARE A COWARD.

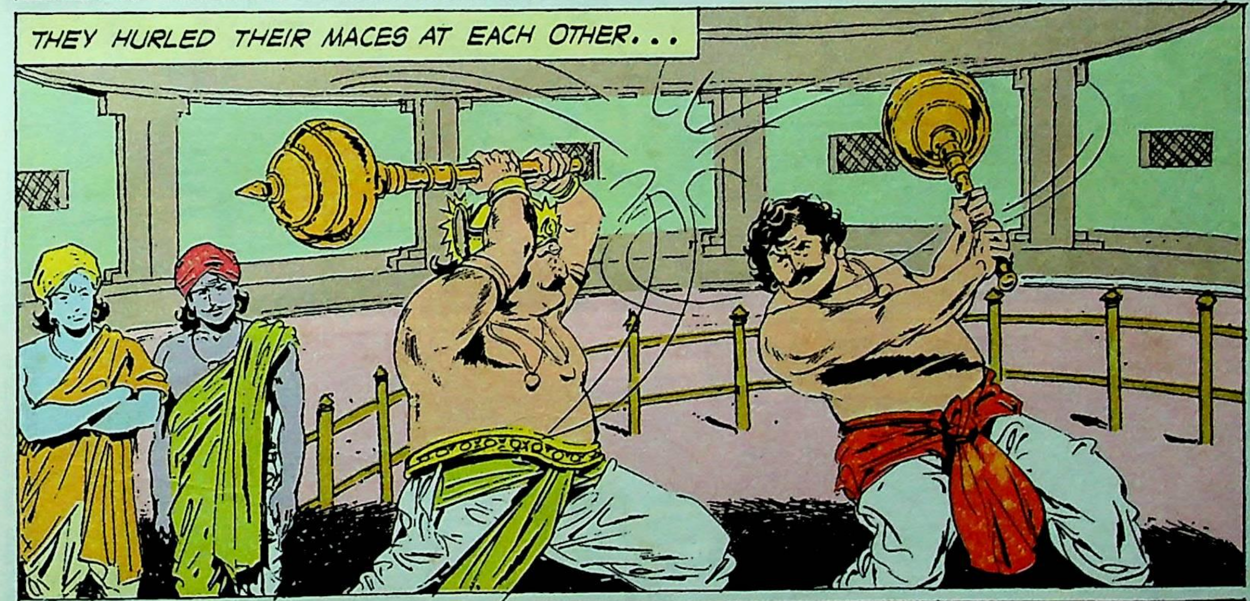

AS FOR ARJUNA, HE IS TOO YOUNG. HE IS NO MATCH FOR ME. BHEEMA ALONE IS MY EQUAL. I'LL TAKE HIM ON.

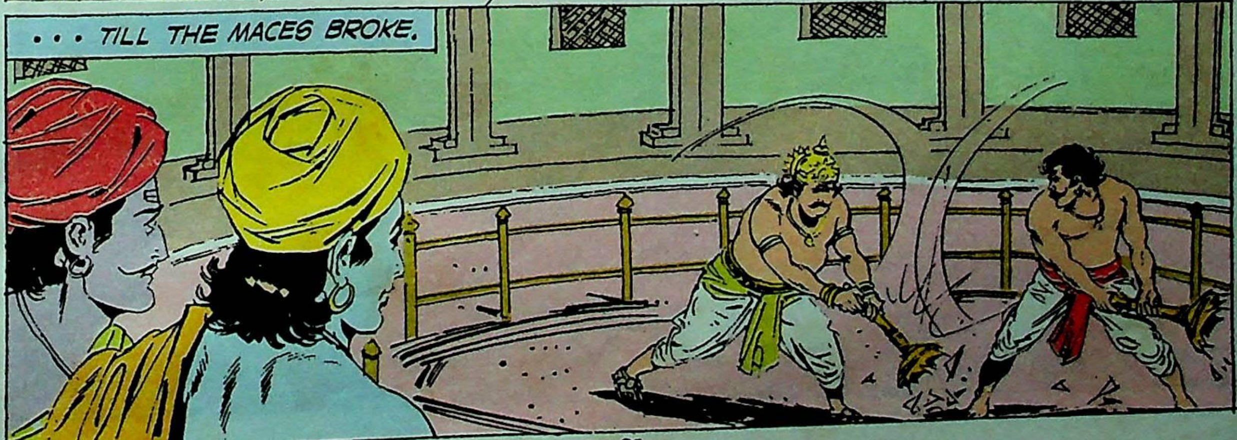
JARASANDHA THREW A HUGE MACE TO BHEEMA . . .

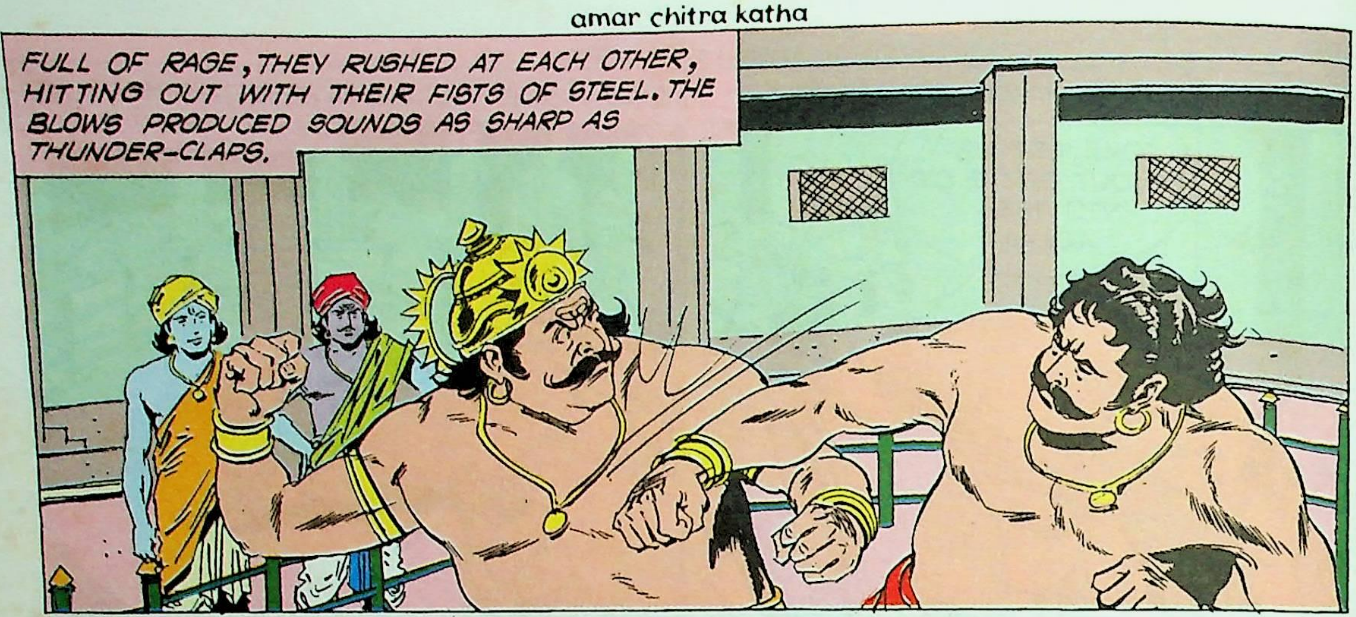



. . . AND TOOK ANOTHER FOR HIMSELF.
COME, LET US GO OUT OF THE CITY INTO THE ARENA.

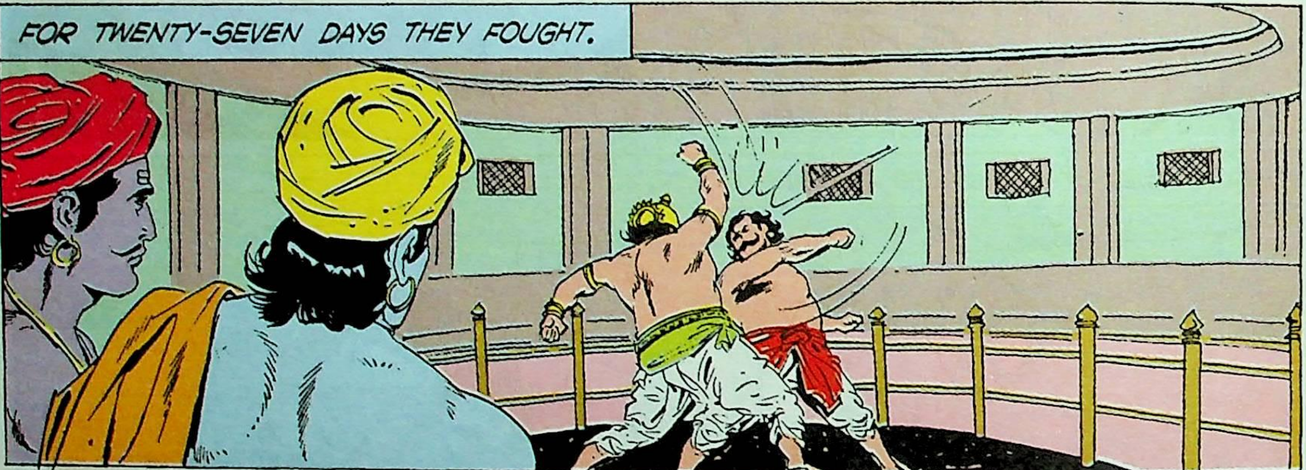

ONCE INSIDE THE ARENA, THE TWO WARRIORS BEGAN THEIR FIGHT.


THEY HURLED THEIR MACES AT EACH OTHER . . .

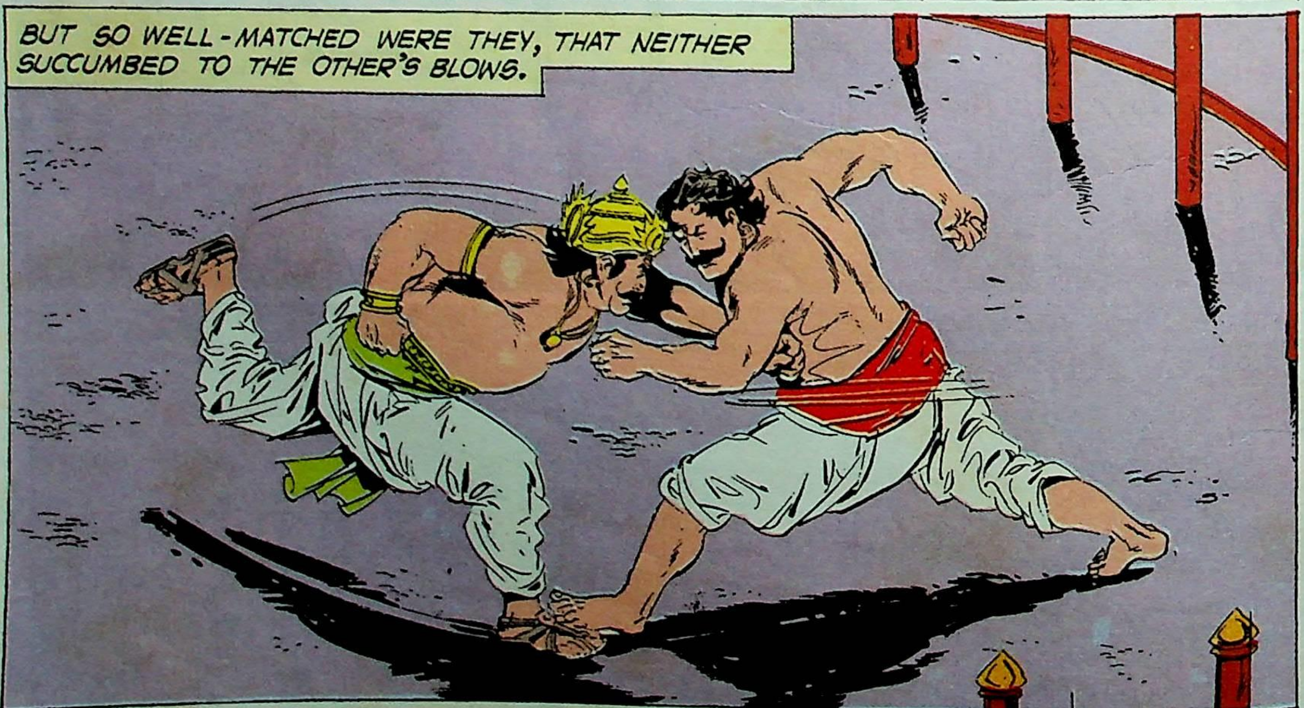

. . . TILL THE MACES BROKE.



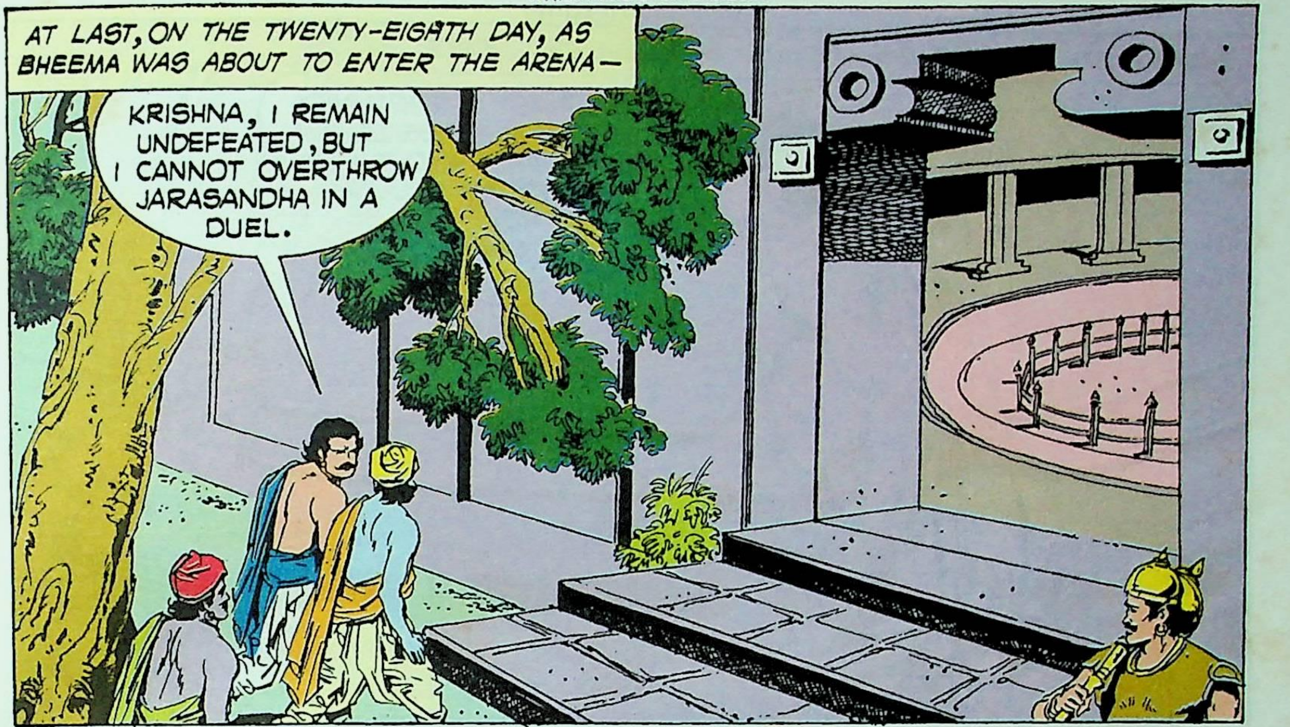
FULL OF RAGE, THEY RUSHED AT EACH OTHER, HITTING OUT WITH THEIR FISTS OF STEEL. THE BLOWS PRODUCED SOUNDS AS SHARP AS THUNDER-CLAPS.

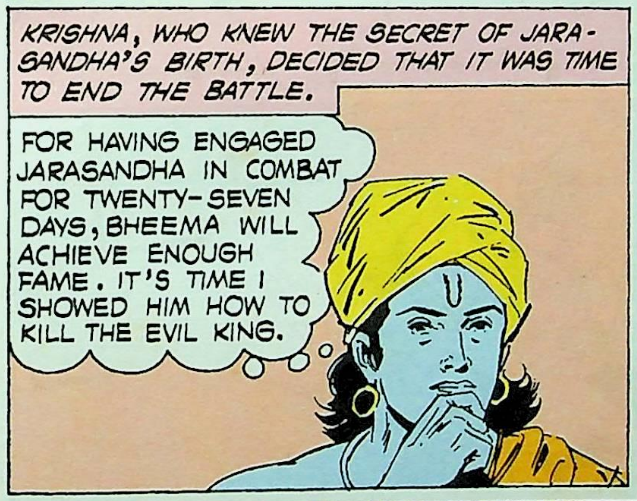


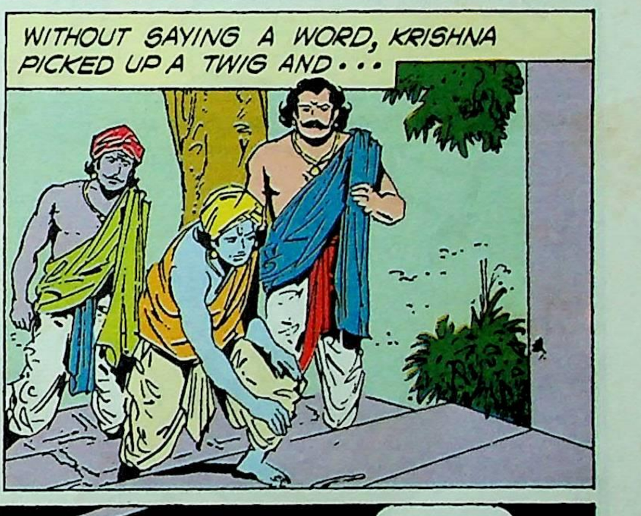
FOR TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS THEY FOUGHT.

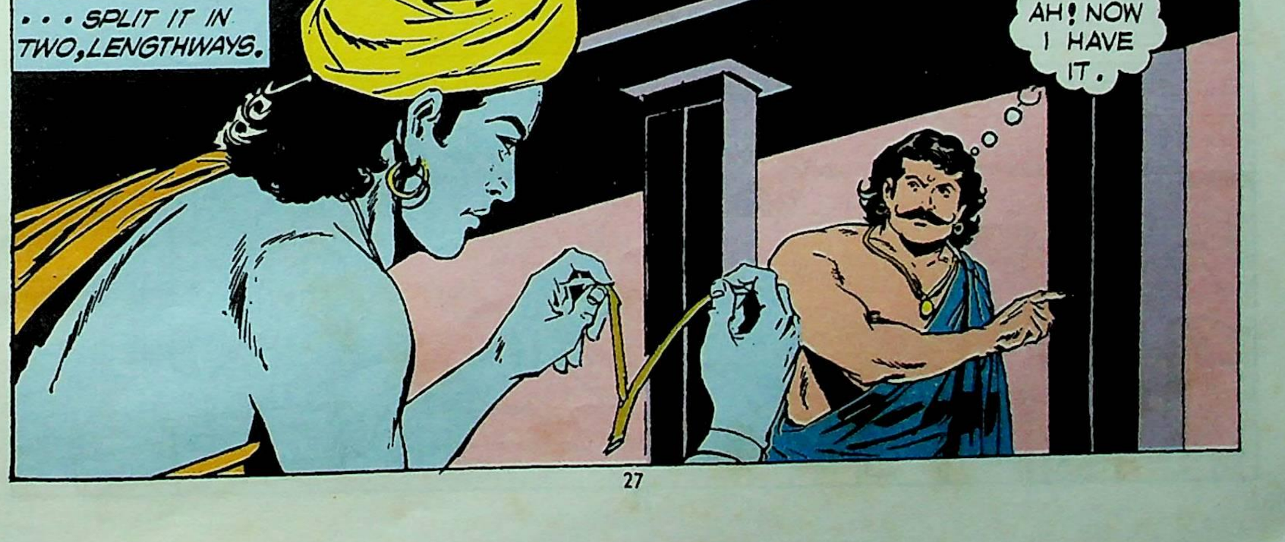


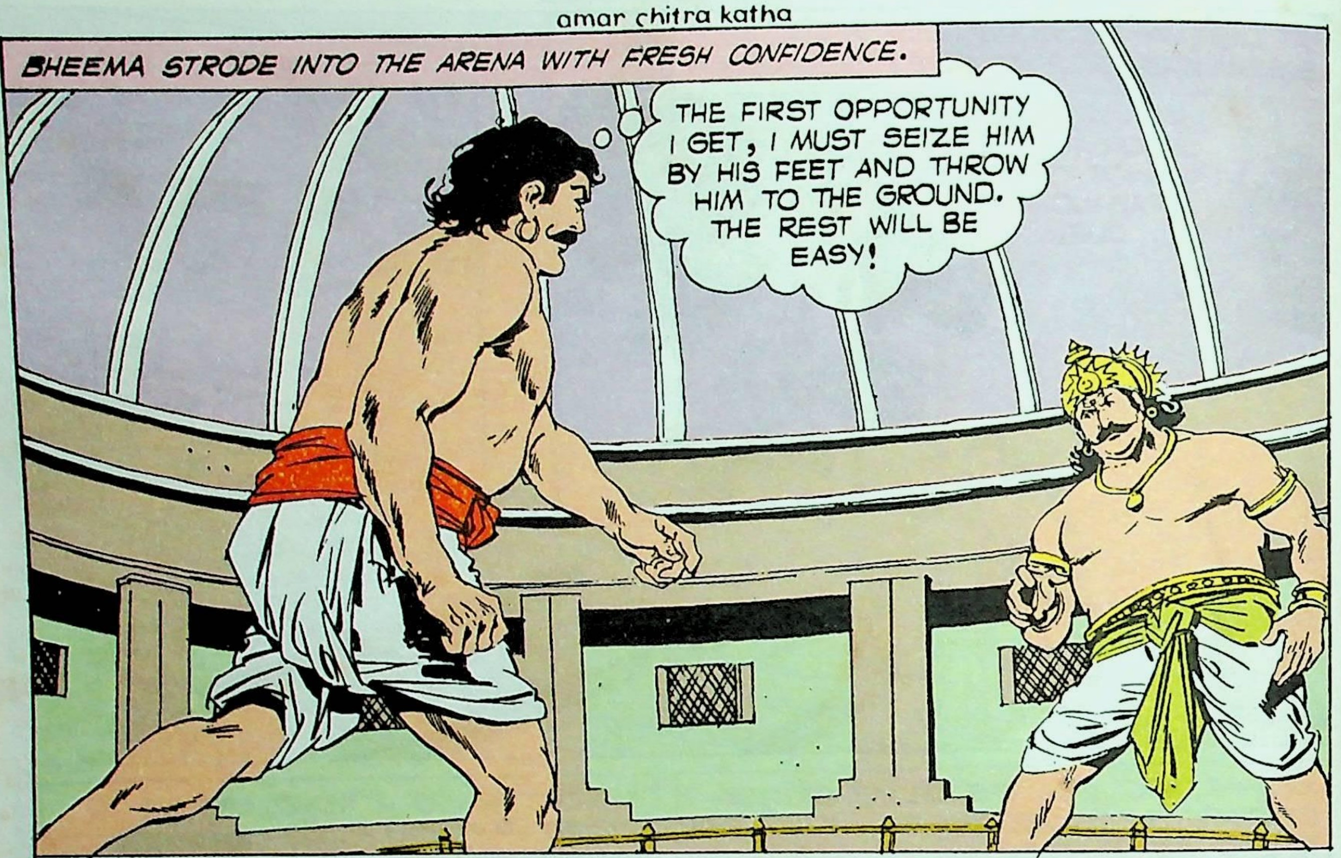
BUT SO WELL-MATCHED WERE THEY, THAT NEITHER SUCCUMBED TO THE OTHER'S BLOWS.

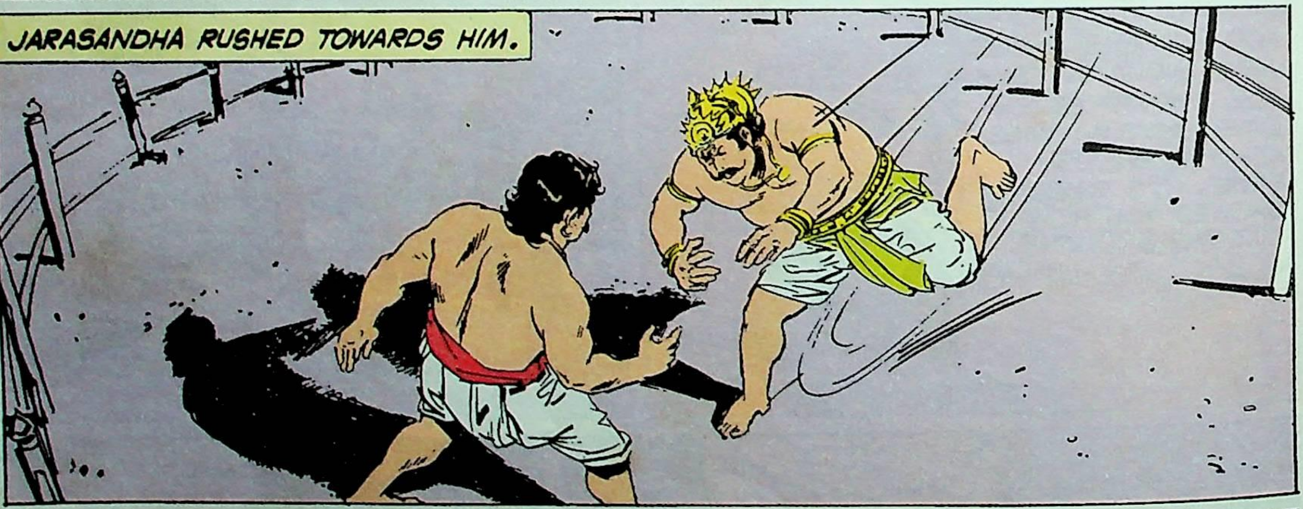

AT LAST, ON THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY, AS BHEEMA WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE ARENA—
KRISHNA, I REMAIN UNDEFEATED, BUT I CANNOT OVERTHROW JARASANDHA IN A DUEL.

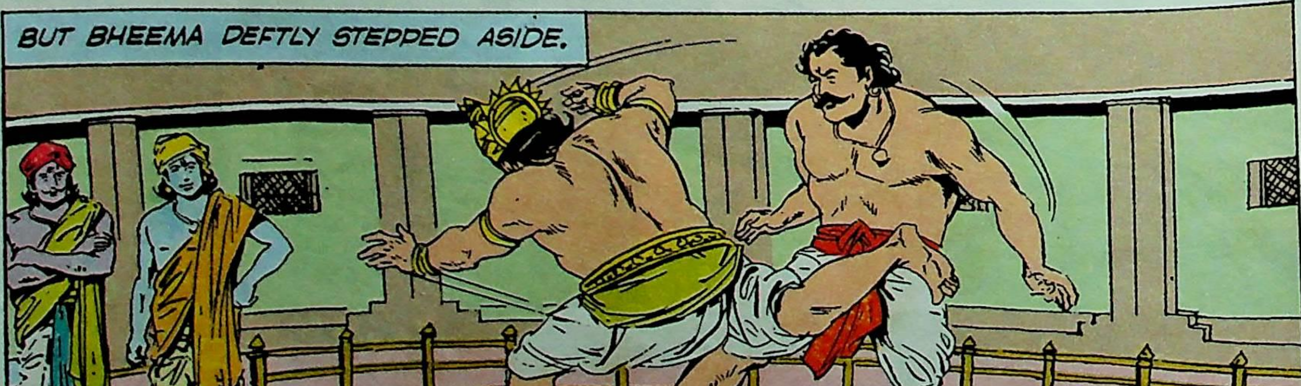

KRISHNA, WHO KNEW THE SECRET OF JARASANDHA'S BIRTH, DECIDED THAT IT WAS TIME TO END THE BATTLE.
FOR HAVING ENGAGED JARASANDHA IN COMBAT FOR TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS, BHEEMA WILL ACHIEVE ENOUGH FAME. IT'S TIME I SHOWED HIM HOW TO KILL THE EVIL KING.

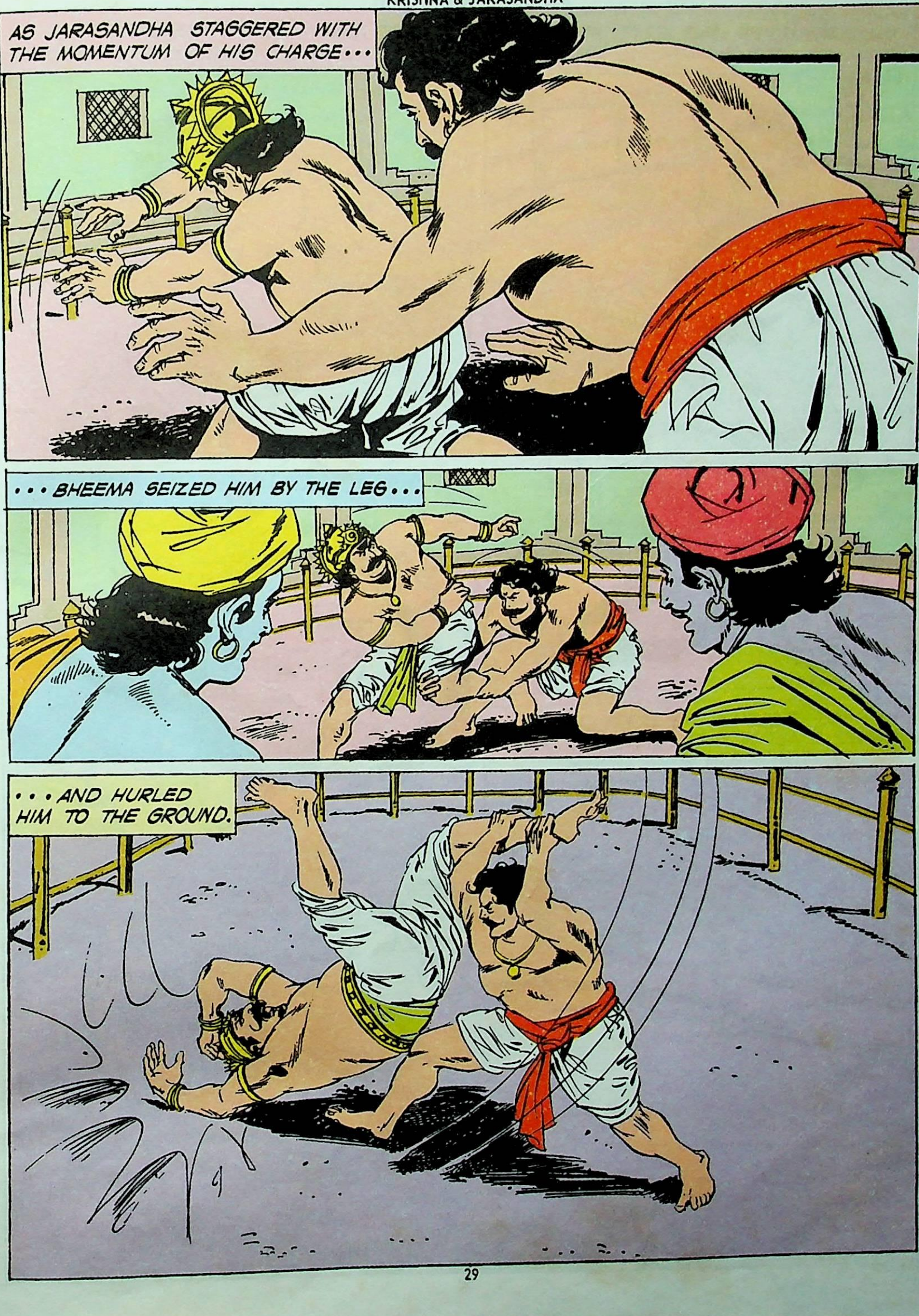

WITHOUT SAYING A WORD, KRISHNA PICKED UP A TWIG AND . . .


. . . SPLIT IT IN TWO, LENGTHWAYS.
AH! NOW I HAVE IT.

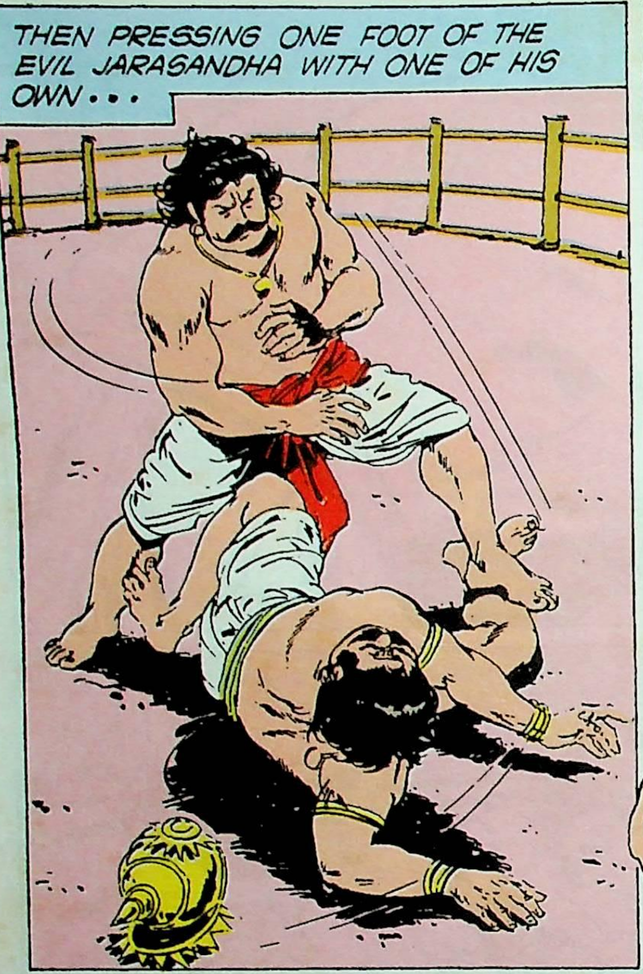

BHEEMA STRODE INTO THE ARENA WITH FRESH CONFIDENCE.
THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY I GET, I MUST SEIZE HIM BY HIS FEET AND THROW HIM TO THE GROUND. THE REST WILL BE EASY!


JARASANDHA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.

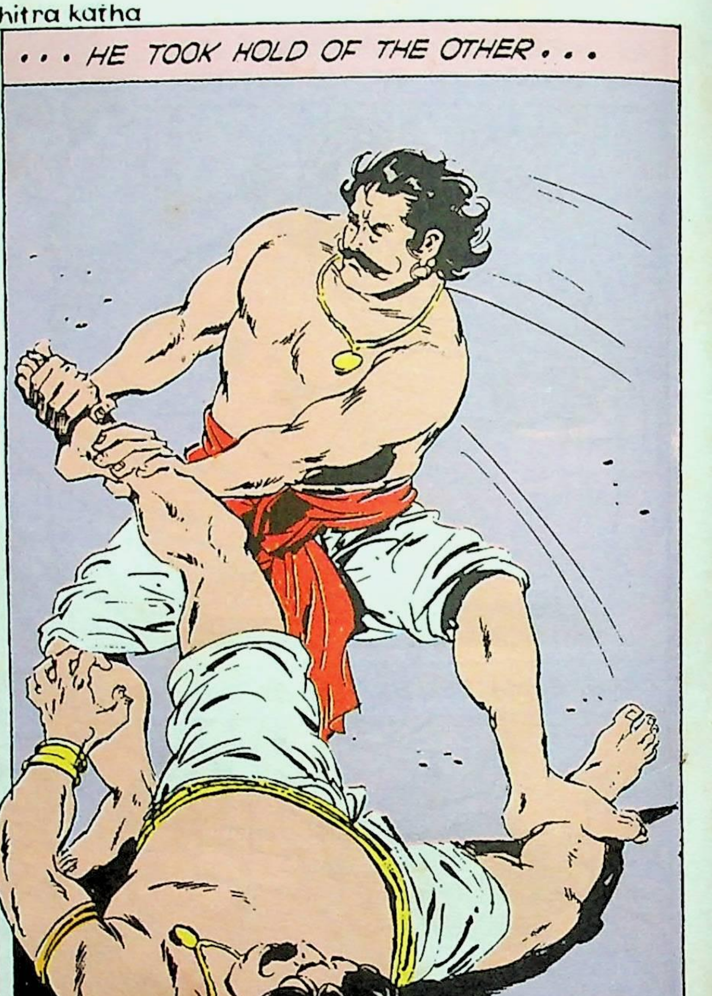

BUT BHEEMA DEFTLY STEPPED ASIDE.


AS JARASANDHA STAGGERED WITH THE MOMENTUM OF HIS CHARGE...
...BHEEMA SEIZED HIM BY THE LEG...
...AND HURLED HIM TO THE GROUND.

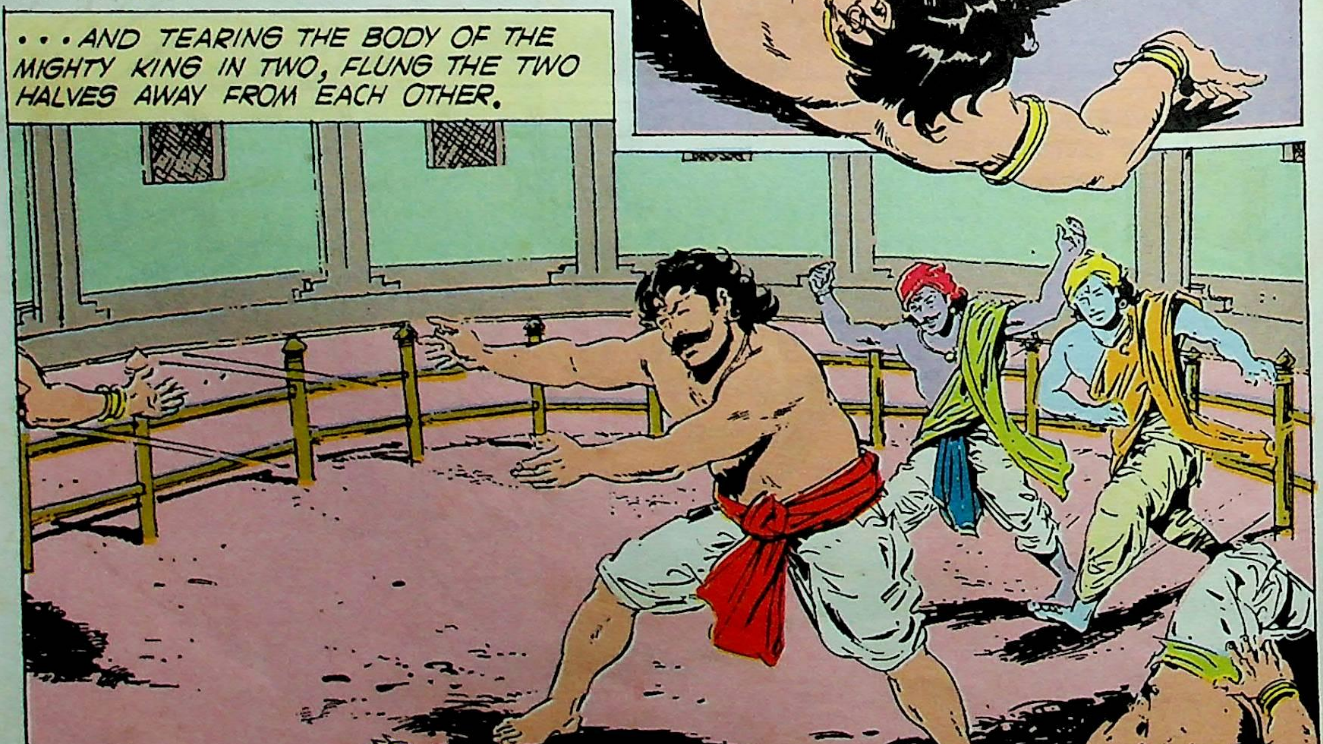
THEN PRESSING ONE FOOT OF THE EVIL JARASANDHA WITH ONE OF HIS OWN . . .

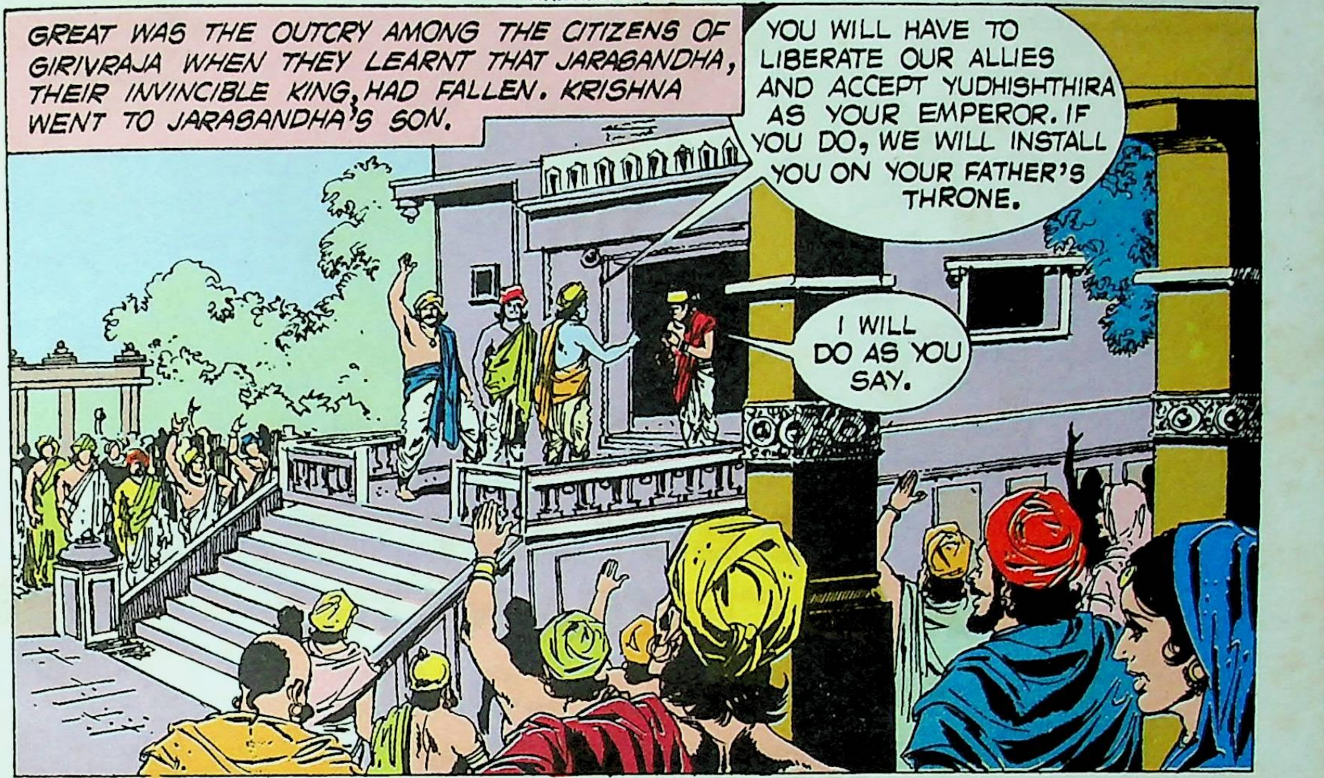


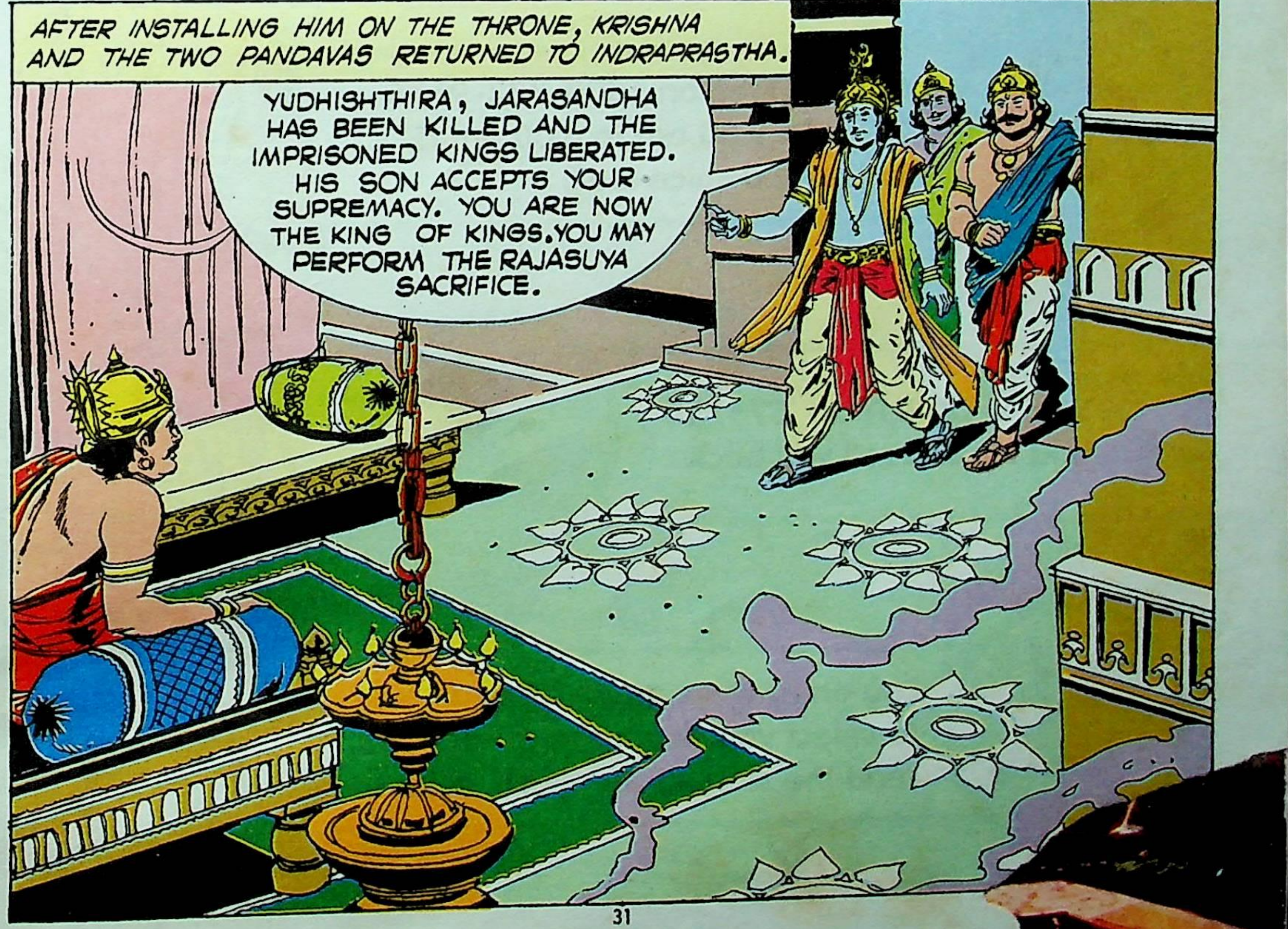
. . . HE TOOK HOLD OF THE OTHER . . .



. . . AND TEARING THE BODY OF THE MIGHTY KING IN TWO, FLUNG THE TWO HALVES AWAY FROM EACH OTHER.




GREAT WAS THE OUTCRY AMONG THE CITIZENS OF GIRIVRAJA WHEN THEY LEARNT THAT JARASANDHA, THEIR INVINCIBLE KING, HAD FALLEN. KRISHNA WENT TO JARASANDHA'S SON.
YOU WILL HAVE TO LIBERATE OUR ALLIES AND ACCEPT YUDHISHTHIRA AS YOUR EMPEROR. IF YOU DO, WE WILL INSTALL YOU ON YOUR FATHER'S THRONE.
I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.


AFTER INSTALLING HIM ON THE THRONE, KRISHNA AND THE TWO PANDAVAS RETURNED TO INDRAPRASTHA.
YUDHISHTHIRA, JARASANDHA HAS BEEN KILLED AND THE IMPRISONED KINGS LIBERATED. HIS SON ACCEPTS YOUR SUPREMACY. YOU ARE NOW THE KING OF KINGS. YOU MAY PERFORM THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE.

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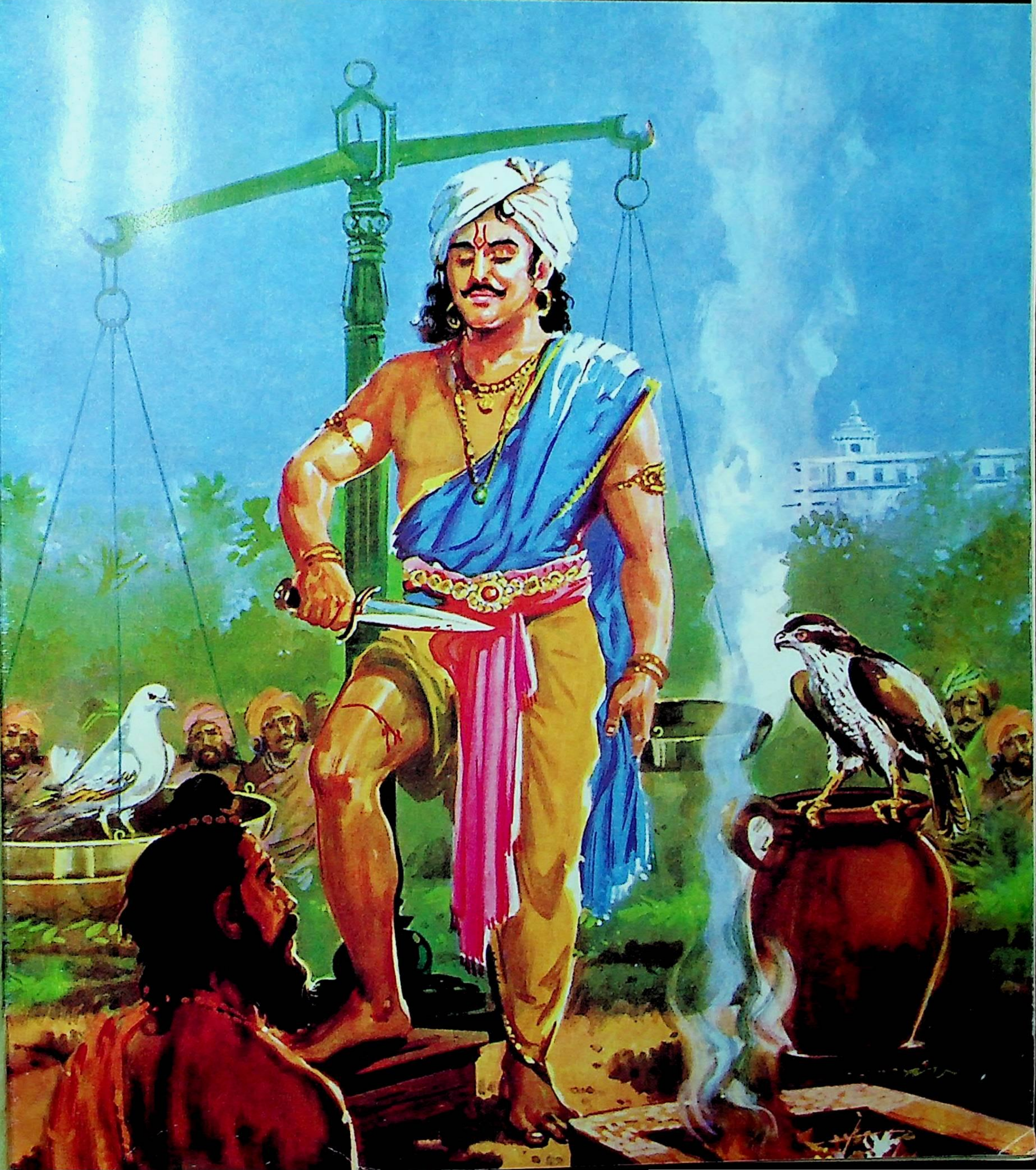

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

INDRA & SHIBI

It is little wonder that Indra was the lord of all gods – he displayed the true characteristics of a perfect leader. It was his diligence and eye for detail that ensured that only the virtuous were given god-like status. Arrogance amd impatience were soon corrected. But, most importantly, as a leader, Lord Indra strove to be worthy of his position.

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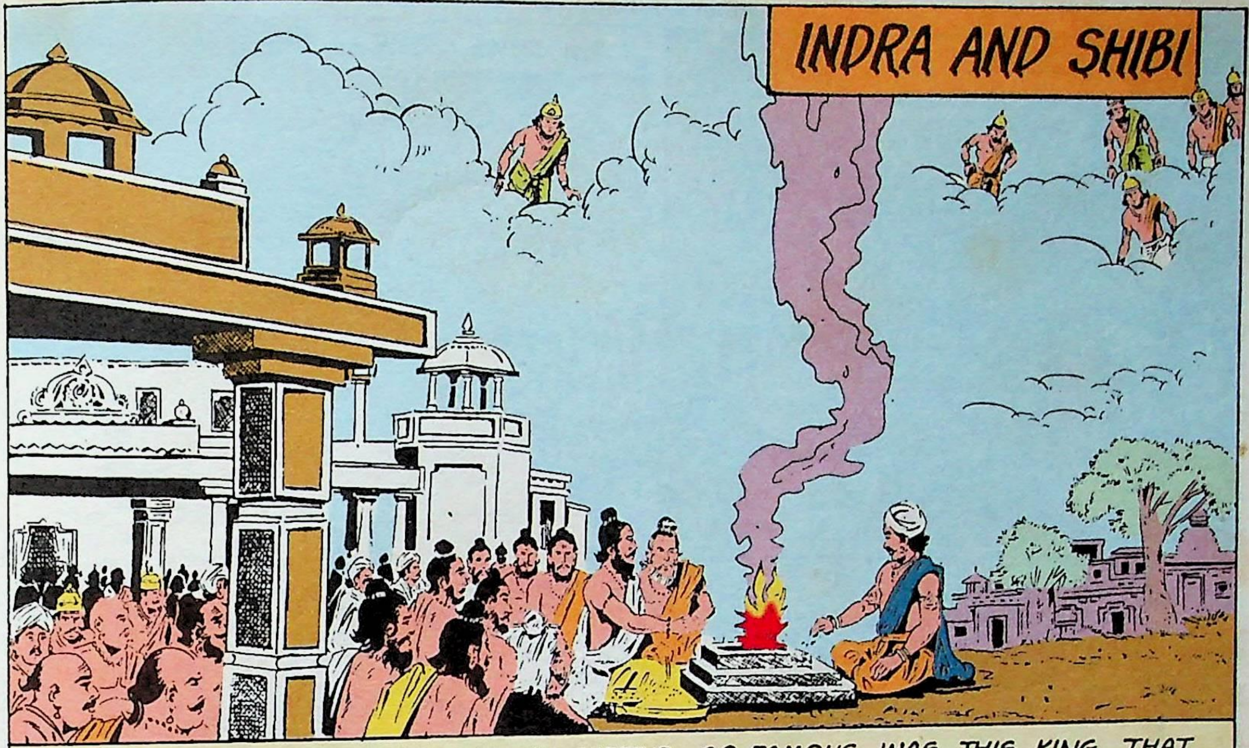
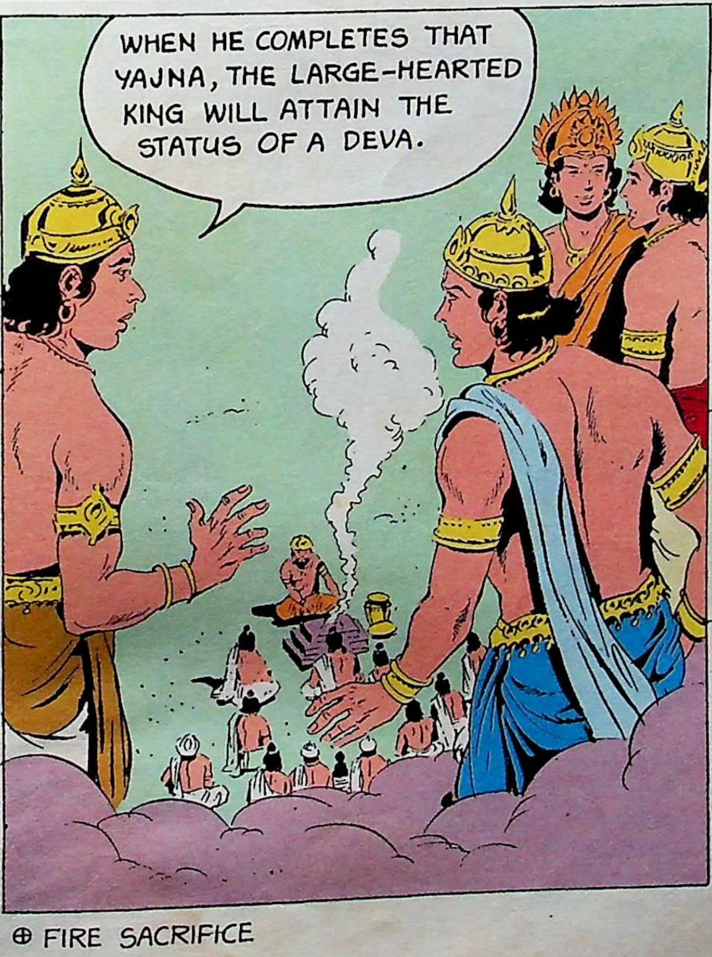
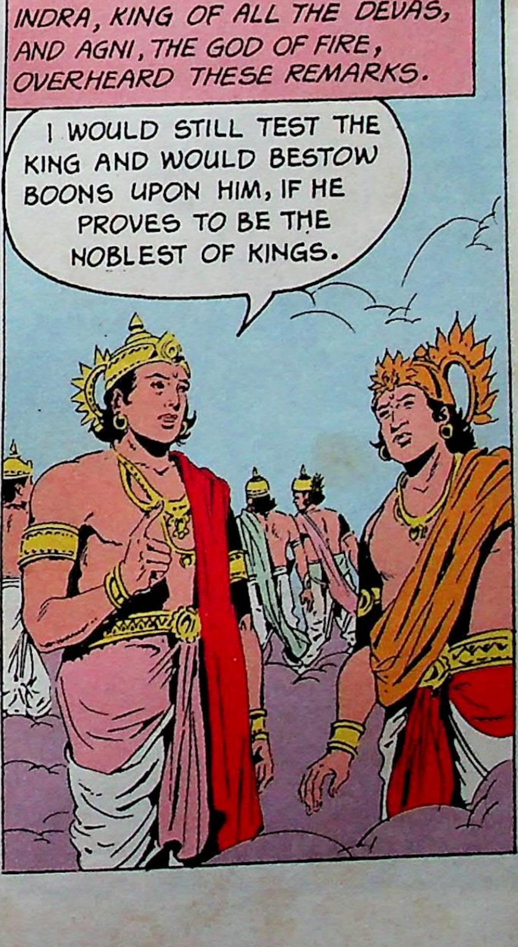
INDRA AND SHIBI



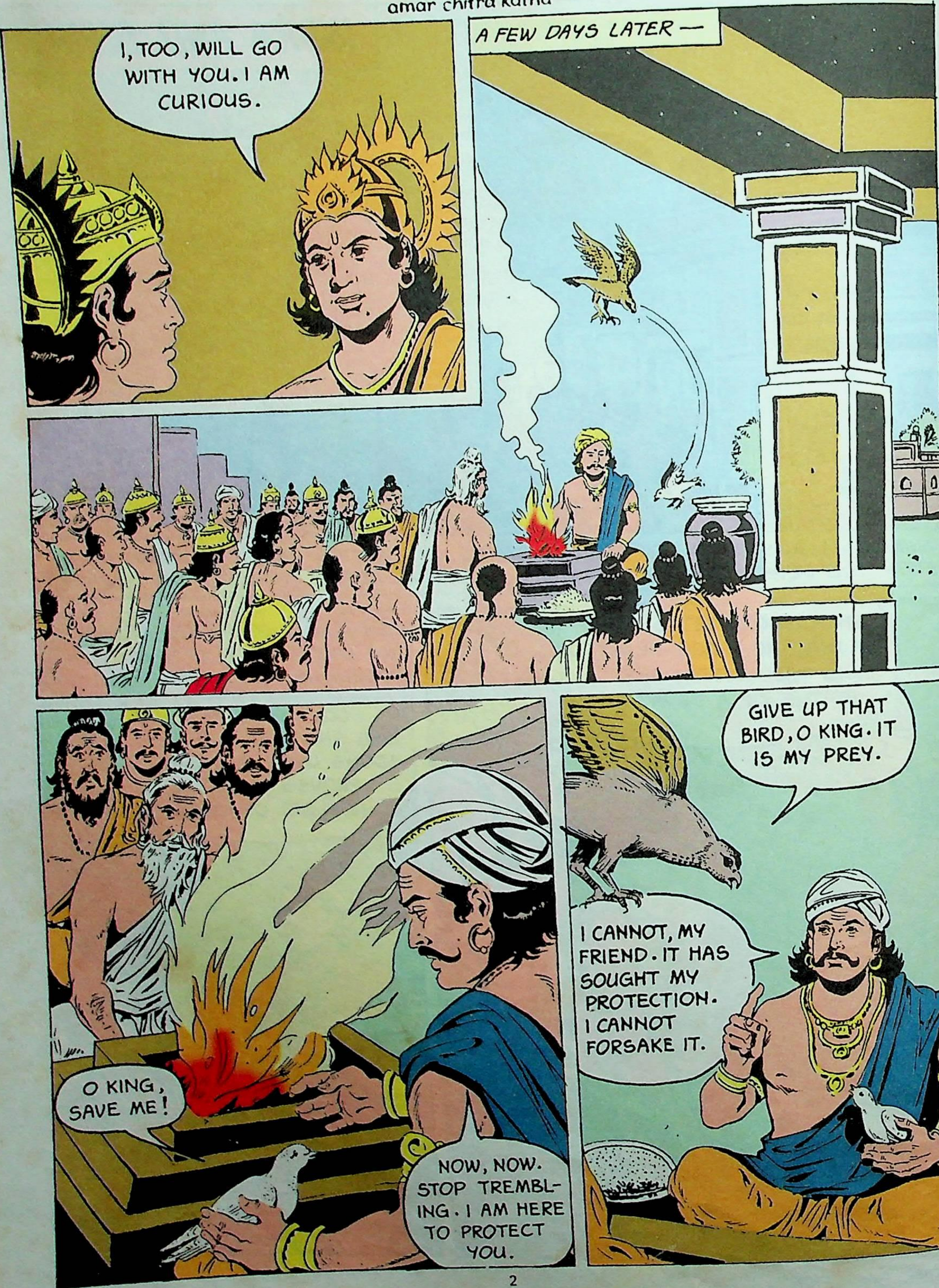
SHIBI RAJA WAS RENOWNED FOR HIS VIRTUE. SO FAMOUS WAS THIS KING, THAT EVEN THE DEVAS CAME OUT OF THEIR CELESTIAL ABODE TO WATCH HIS YAJNAS⊕

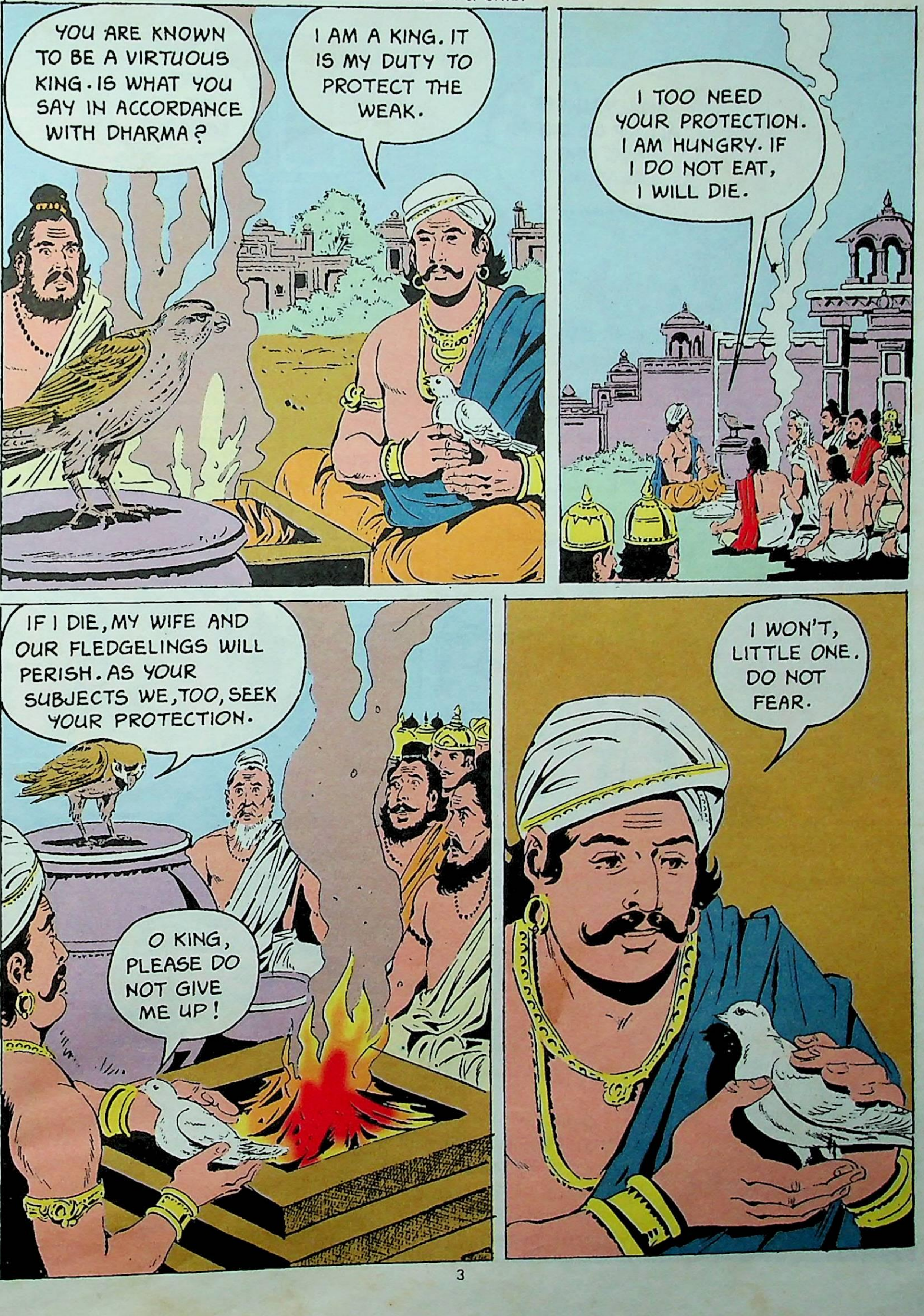

WHEN HE COMPLETES THAT YAJNA, THE LARGE-HEARTED KING WILL ATTAIN THE STATUS OF A DEVA.

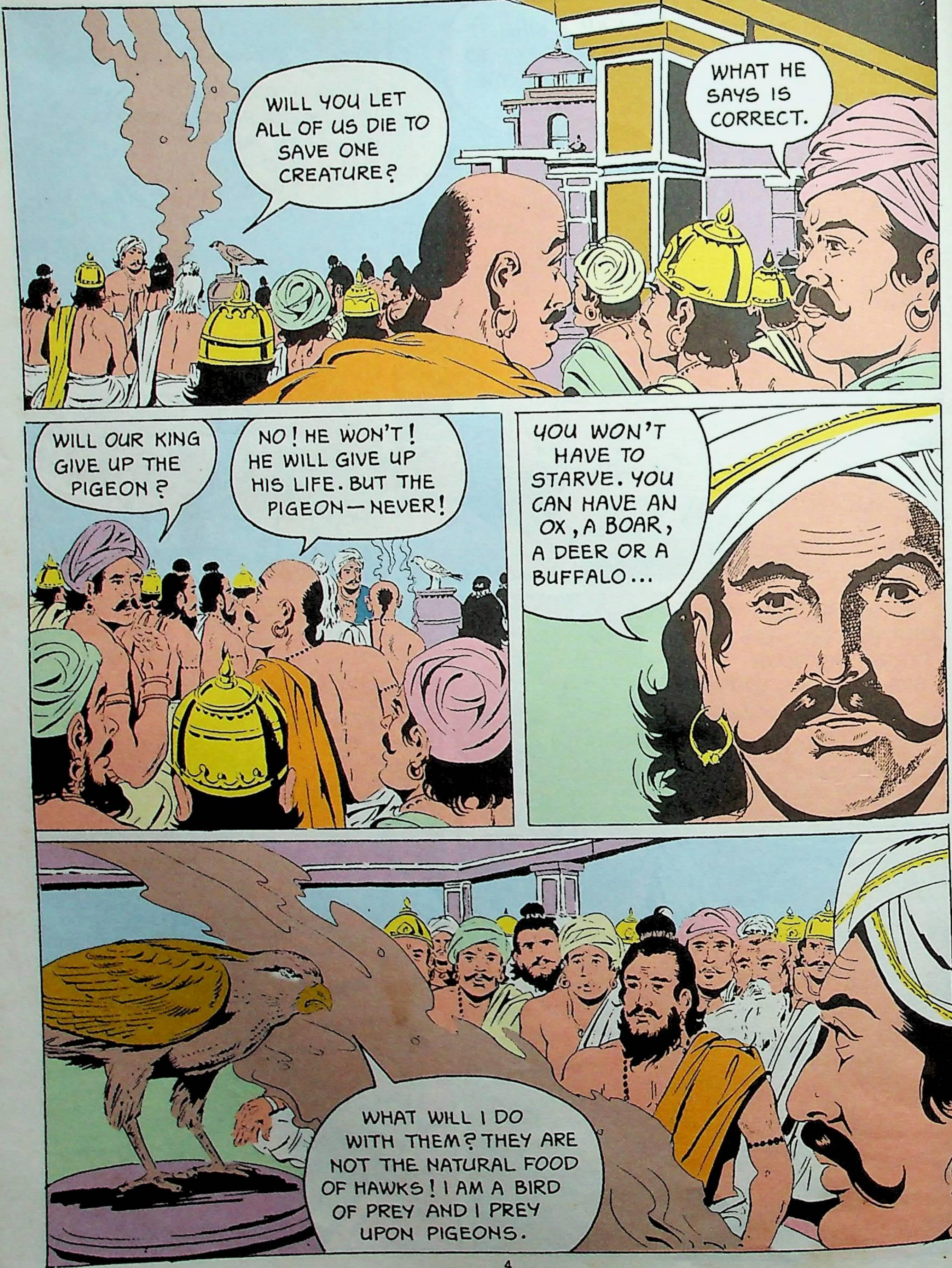
INDRA, KING OF ALL THE DEVAS, AND AGNI, THE GOD OF FIRE, OVERHEARD THESE REMARKS.

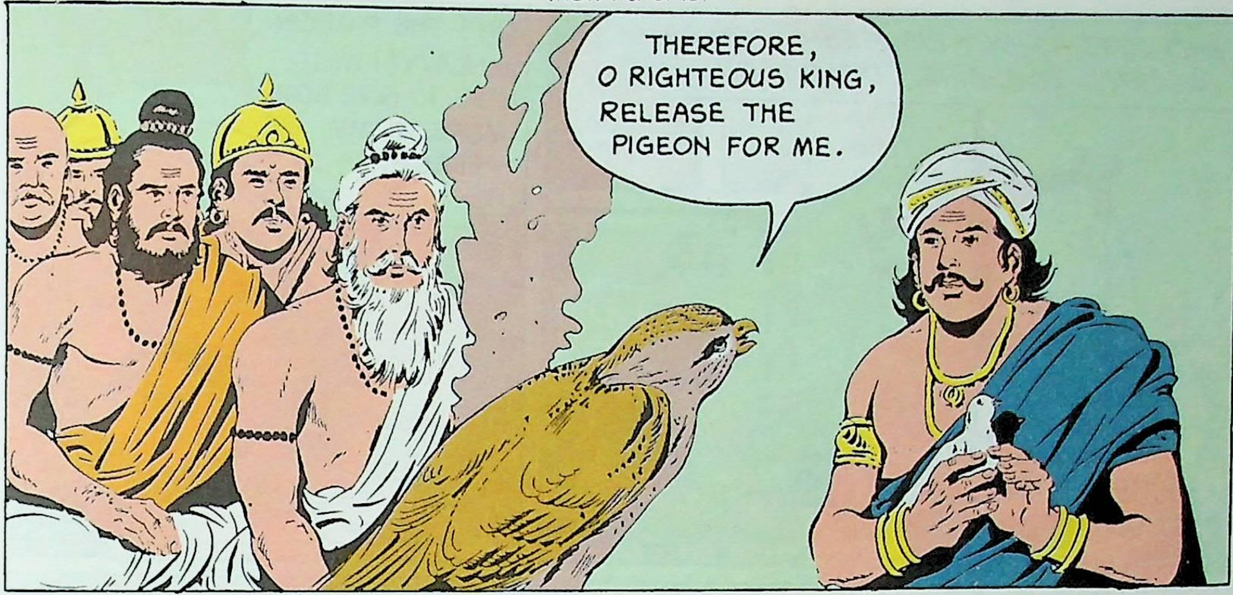

I WOULD STILL TEST THE KING AND WOULD BESTOW BOONS UPON HIM, IF HE PROVES TO BE THE NOBLEST OF KINGS.

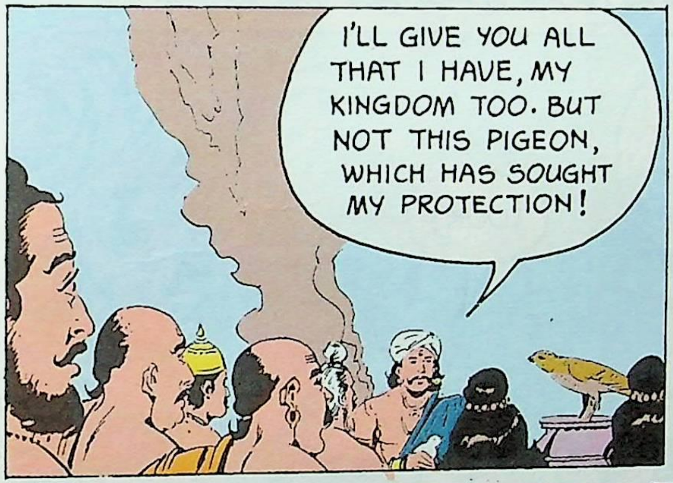
⊕ FIRE SACRIFICE

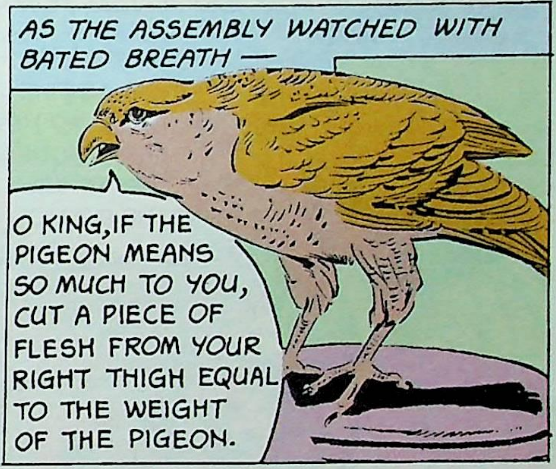

I, TOO, WILL GO WITH YOU. I AM CURIOUS.
A FEW DAYS LATER —
O KING, SAVE ME!
NOW, NOW. STOP TREMBLING. I AM HERE TO PROTECT YOU.
GIVE UP THAT BIRD, O KING. IT IS MY PREY.
I CANNOT, MY FRIEND. IT HAS SOUGHT MY PROTECTION. I CANNOT FORSAKE IT.

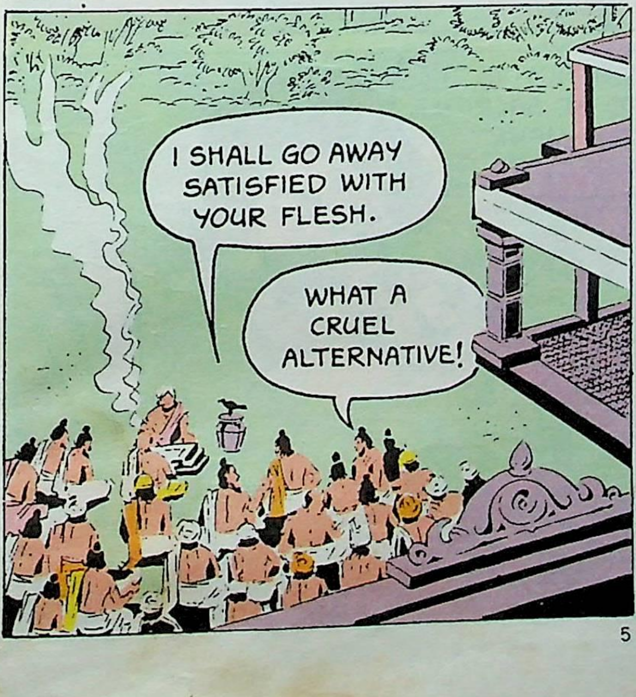

YOU ARE KNOWN TO BE A VIRTUOUS KING. IS WHAT YOU SAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH DHARMA?
I AM A KING. IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT THE WEAK.
I TOO NEED YOUR PROTECTION. I AM HUNGRY. IF I DO NOT EAT, I WILL DIE.
IF I DIE, MY WIFE AND OUR FLEDGELINGS WILL PERISH. AS YOUR SUBJECTS WE, TOO, SEEK YOUR PROTECTION.
O KING, PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ME UP!
I WON'T, LITTLE ONE. DO NOT FEAR.

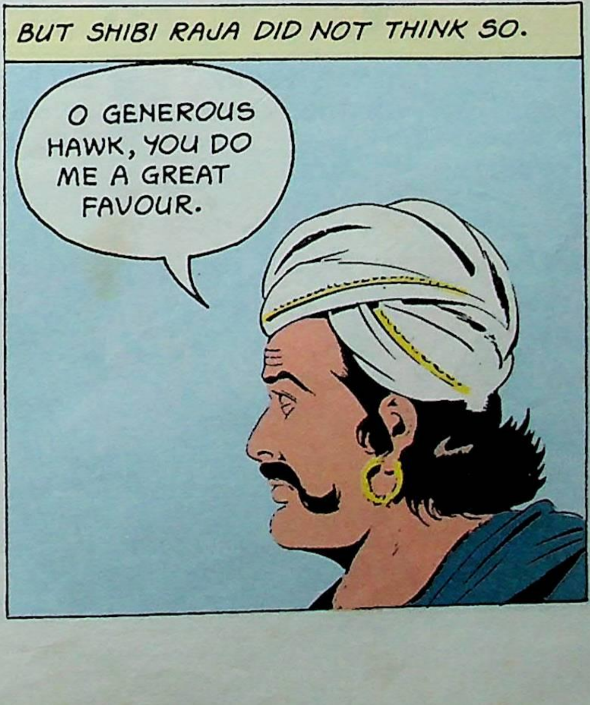

WILL YOU LET ALL OF US DIE TO SAVE ONE CREATURE?
WHAT HE SAYS IS CORRECT.
WILL OUR KING GIVE UP THE PIGEON?
NO! HE WON'T! HE WILL GIVE UP HIS LIFE. BUT THE PIGEON—NEVER!
YOU WON'T HAVE TO STARVE. YOU CAN HAVE AN OX, A BOAR, A DEER OR A BUFFALO...
WHAT WILL I DO WITH THEM? THEY ARE NOT THE NATURAL FOOD OF HAWKS! I AM A BIRD OF PREY AND I PREY UPON PIGEONS.

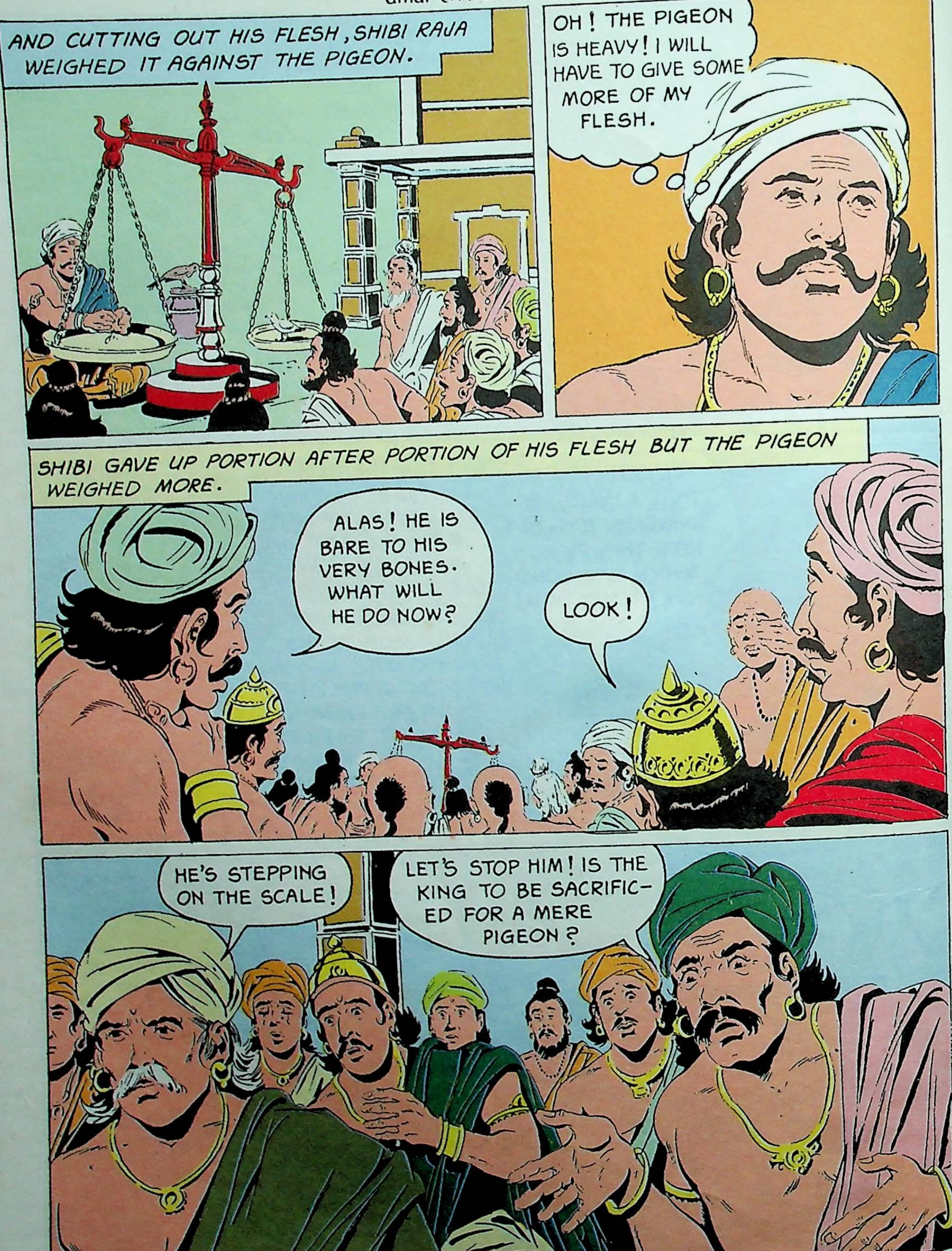

THEREFORE, O RIGHTEOUS KING, RELEASE THE PIGEON FOR ME.

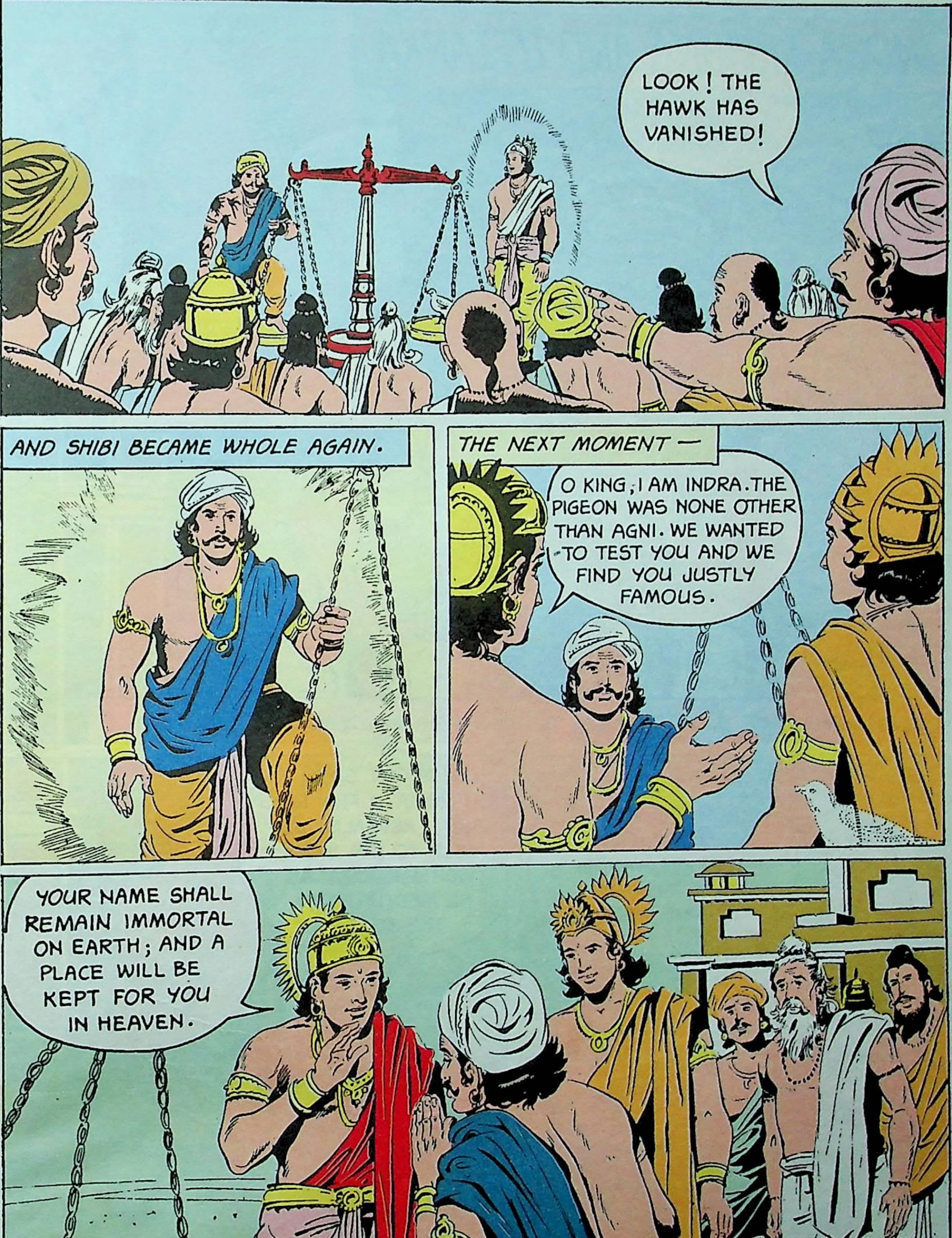

I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THAT I HAVE, MY KINGDOM TOO. BUT NOT THIS PIGEON, WHICH HAS SOUGHT MY PROTECTION!


AS THE ASSEMBLY WATCHED WITH BATED BREATH —
O KING, IF THE PIGEON MEANS SO MUCH TO YOU, CUT A PIECE OF FLESH FROM YOUR RIGHT THIGH EQUAL TO THE WEIGHT OF THE PIGEON.

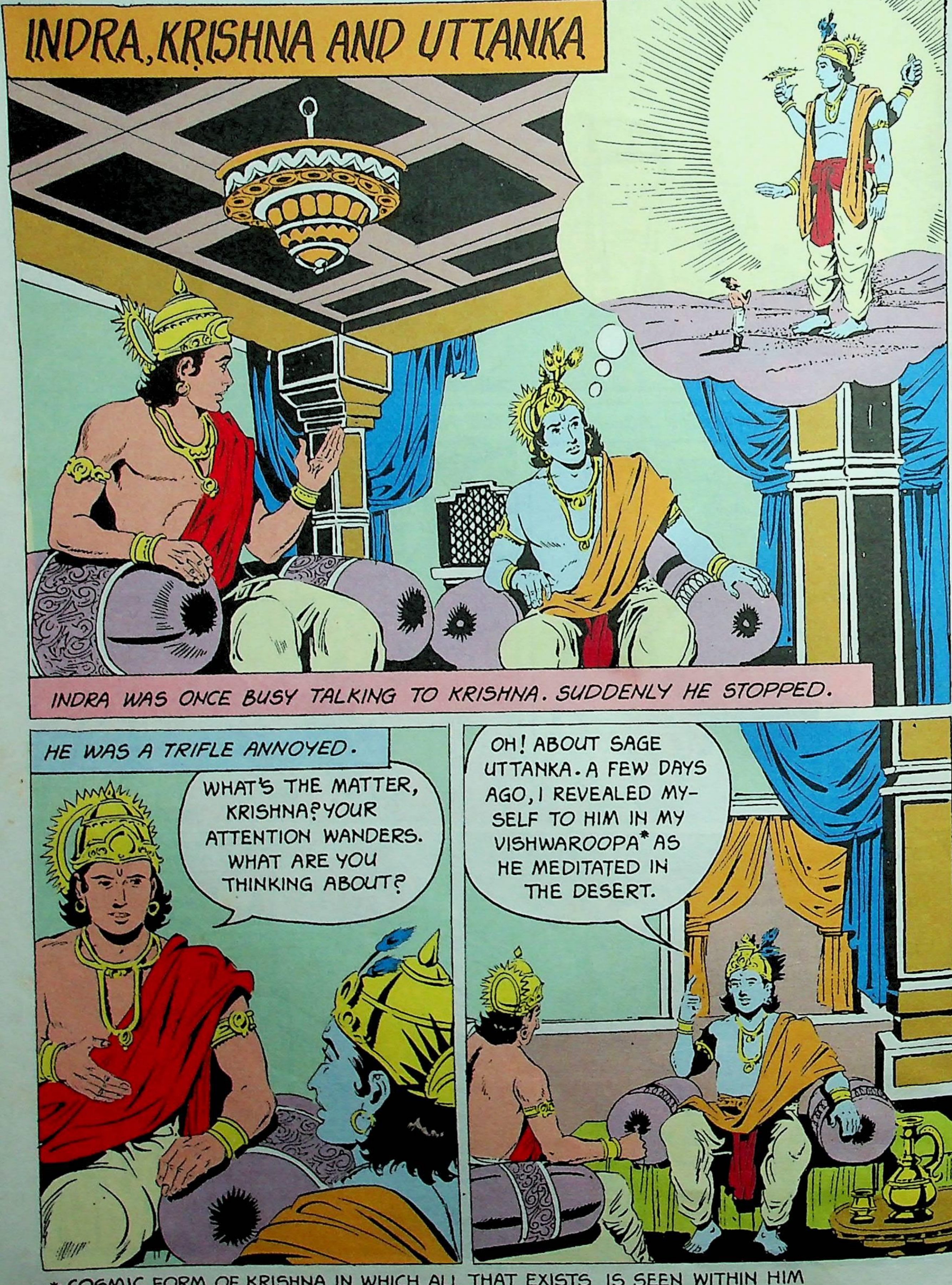

I SHALL GO AWAY SATISFIED WITH YOUR FLESH.
WHAT A CRUEL ALTERNATIVE!


BUT SHIBI RAJA DID NOT THINK SO.
O GENEROUS HAWK, YOU DO ME A GREAT FAVOUR.


AND CUTTING OUT HIS FLESH, SHIBI RAJA WEIGHED IT AGAINST THE PIGEON.
OH! THE PIGEON IS HEAVY! I WILL HAVE TO GIVE SOME MORE OF MY FLESH.
SHIBI GAVE UP PORTION AFTER PORTION OF HIS FLESH BUT THE PIGEON WEIGHED MORE.
ALAS! HE IS BARE TO HIS VERY BONES. WHAT WILL HE DO NOW?
LOOK!
HE'S STEPPING ON THE SCALE!
LET'S STOP HIM! IS THE KING TO BE SACRIFICED FOR A MERE PIGEON?

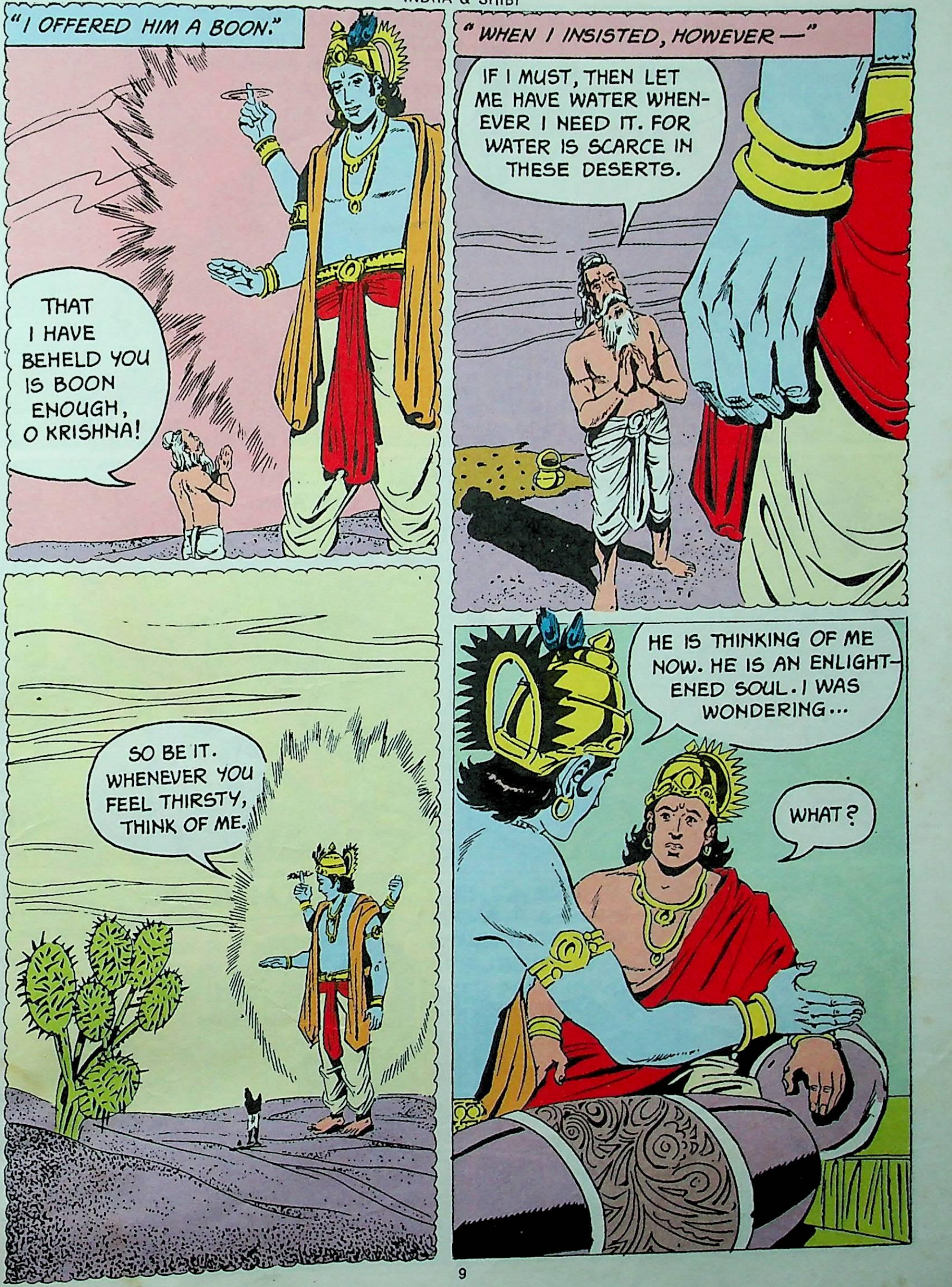

LOOK ! THE HAWK HAS VANISHED!
AND SHIBI BECAME WHOLE AGAIN.
THE NEXT MOMENT —
O KING, I AM INDRA. THE PIGEON WAS NONE OTHER THAN AGNI. WE WANTED TO TEST YOU AND WE FIND YOU JUSTLY FAMOUS.
YOUR NAME SHALL REMAIN IMMORTAL ON EARTH; AND A PLACE WILL BE KEPT FOR YOU IN HEAVEN.

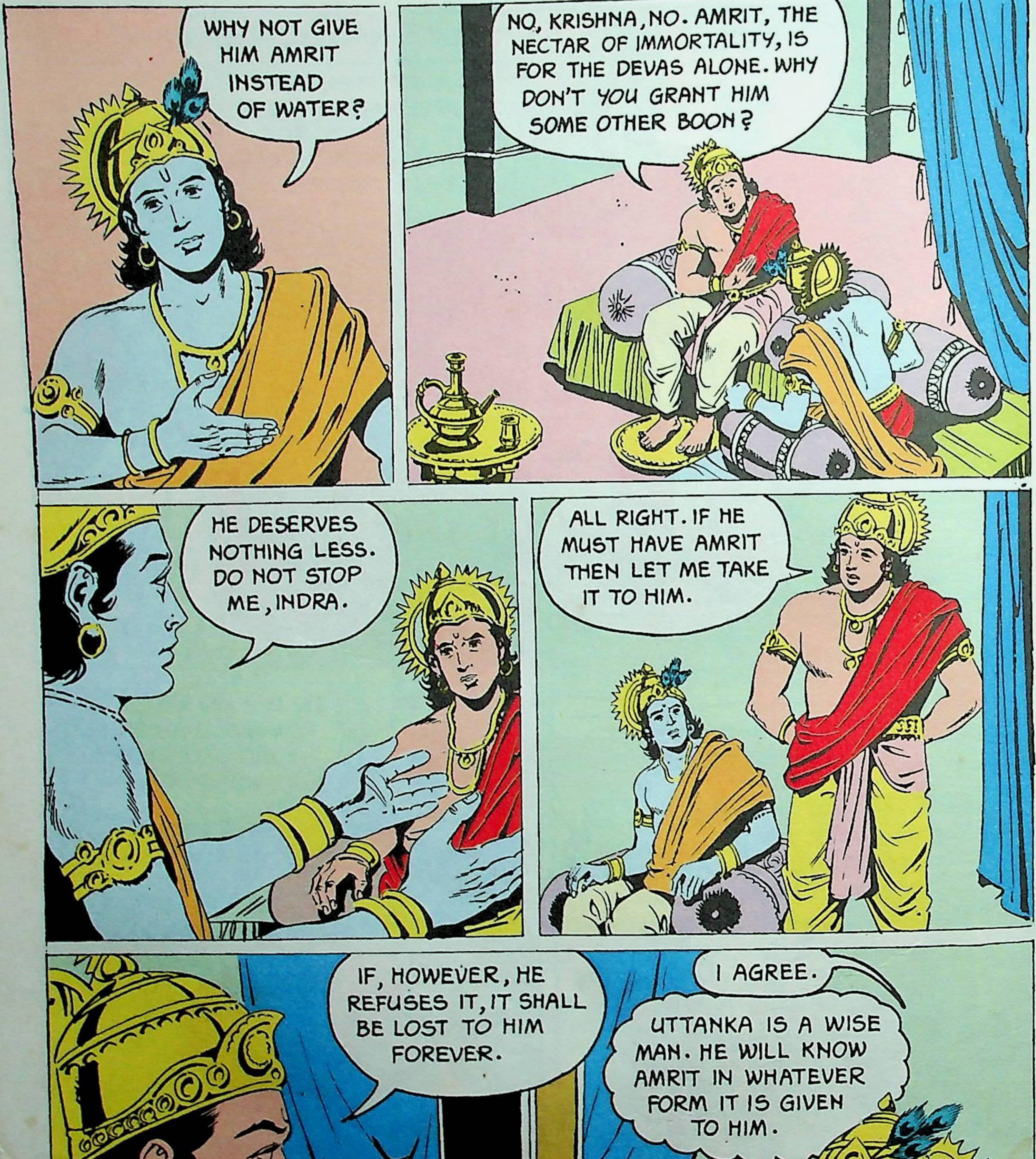
INDRA, KRISHNA AND UTTANKA

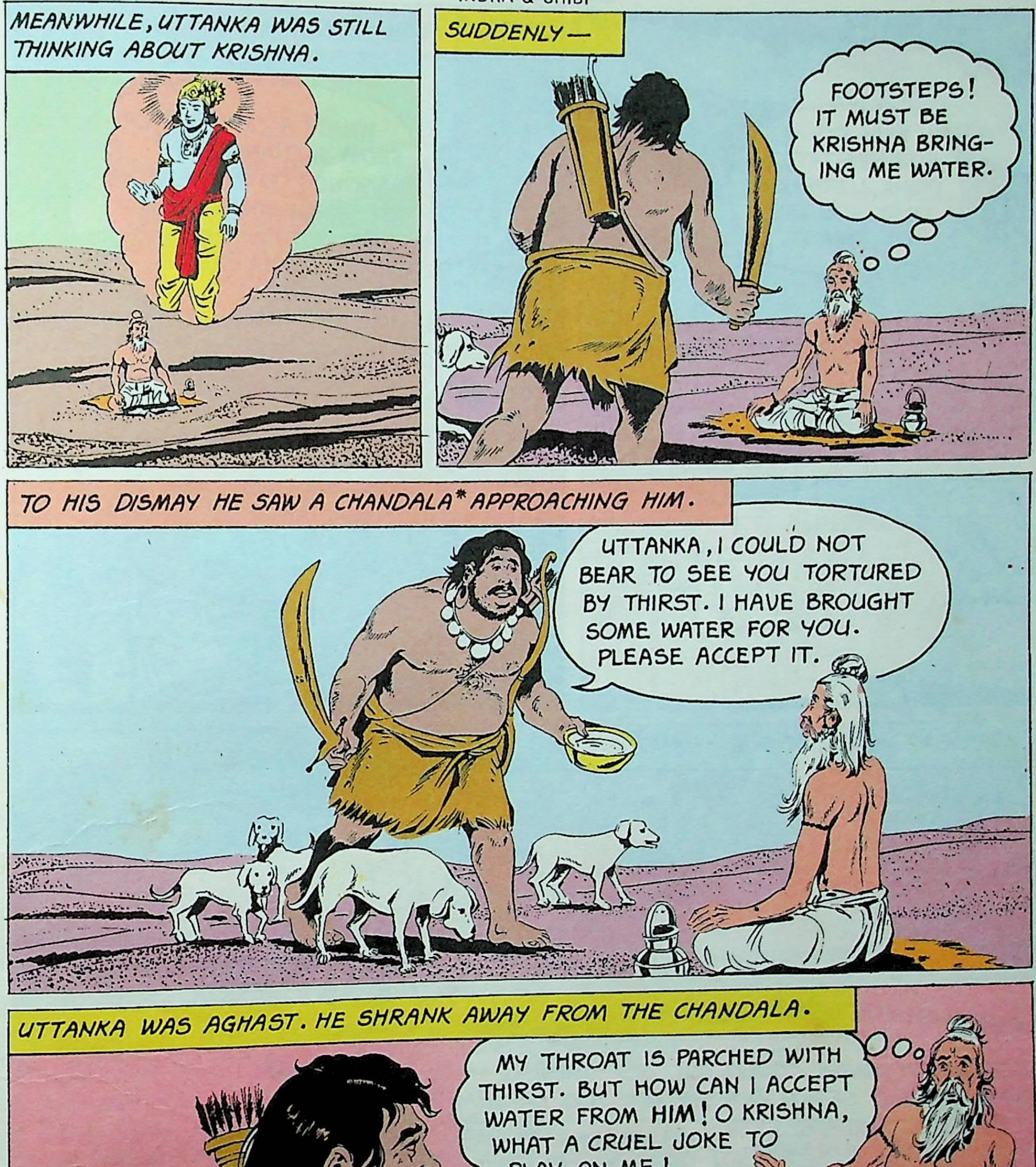

INDRA WAS ONCE BUSY TALKING TO KRISHNA. SUDDENLY HE STOPPED.
HE WAS A TRIFLE ANNOYED.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KRISHNA? YOUR ATTENTION WANDERS. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
OH! ABOUT SAGE UTTANKA. A FEW DAYS AGO, I REVEALED MYSELF TO HIM IN MY VISHWAROOPA* AS HE MEDITATED IN THE DESERT.

---

* COSMIC FORM OF KRISHNA IN WHICH ALL THAT EXISTS IS SEEN WITHIN HIM

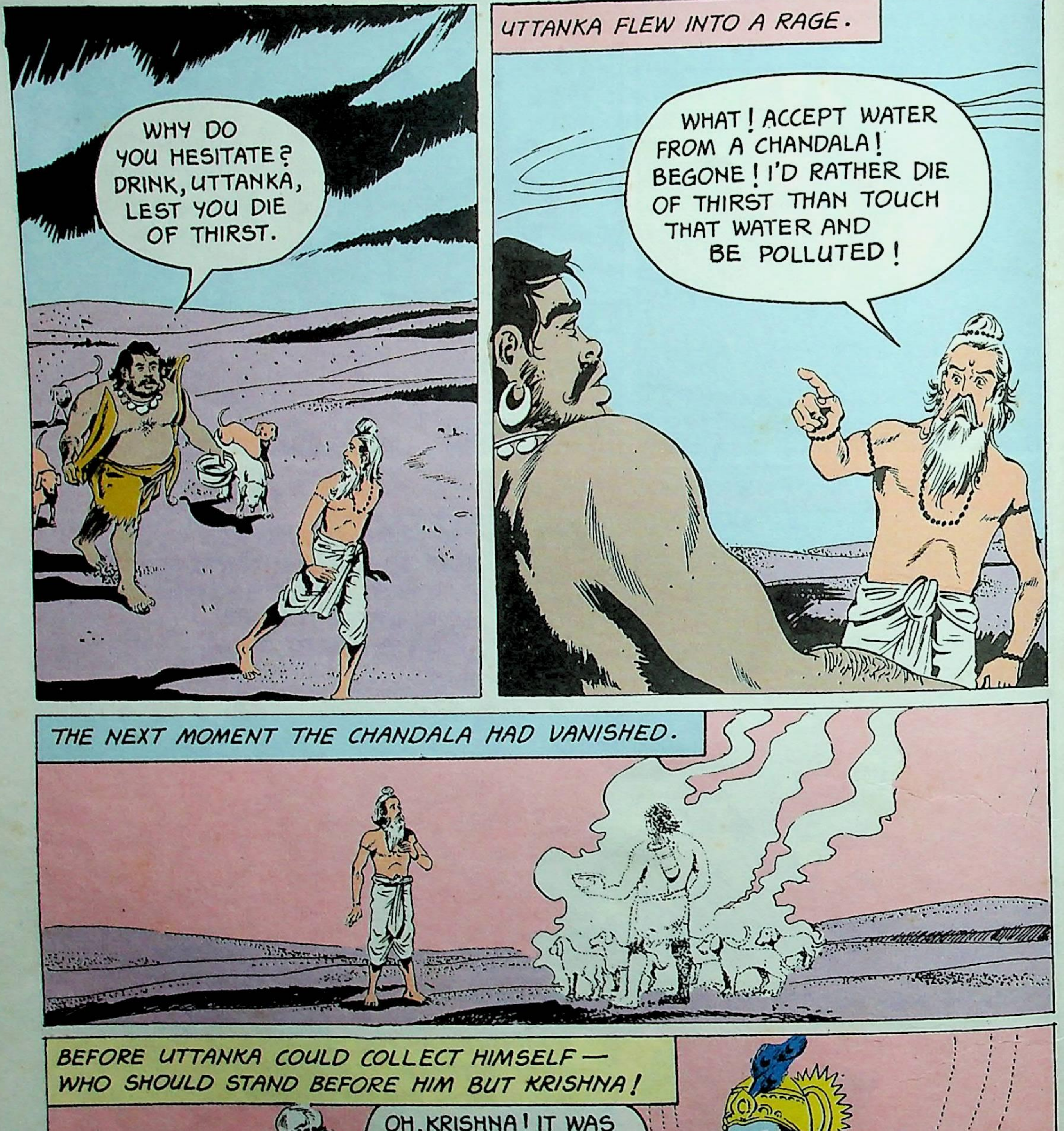

"I OFFERED HIM A BOON."
THAT I HAVE BEHELD YOU IS BOON ENOUGH, O KRISHNA!
"WHEN I INSISTED, HOWEVER —"
IF I MUST, THEN LET ME HAVE WATER WHENEVER I NEED IT. FOR WATER IS SCARCE IN THESE DESERTS.
SO BE IT. WHENEVER YOU FEEL THIRSTY, THINK OF ME.
HE IS THINKING OF ME NOW. HE IS AN ENLIGHTENED SOUL. I WAS WONDERING...
WHAT?

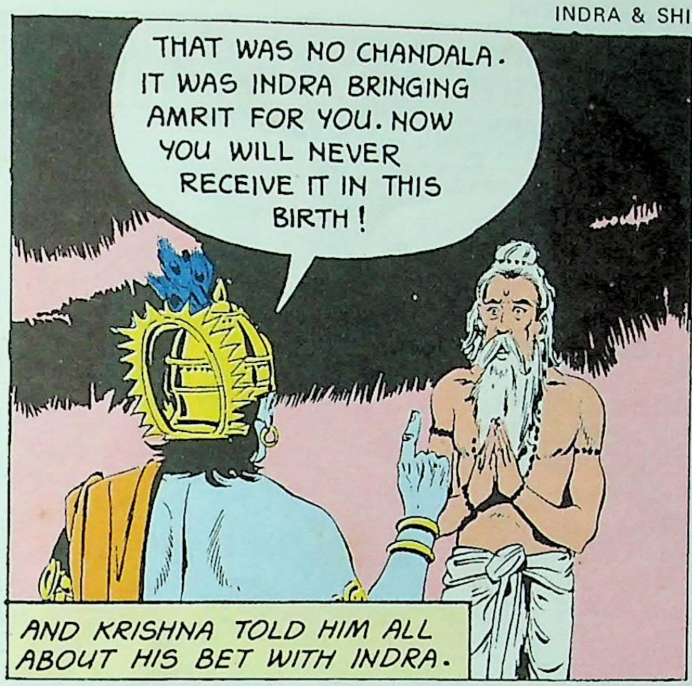

WHY NOT GIVE HIM AMRIT INSTEAD OF WATER?
NO, KRISHNA, NO. AMRIT, THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY, IS FOR THE DEVAS ALONE. WHY DON'T YOU GRANT HIM SOME OTHER BOON?
HE DESERVES NOTHING LESS. DO NOT STOP ME, INDRA.
ALL RIGHT. IF HE MUST HAVE AMRIT THEN LET ME TAKE IT TO HIM.
IF, HOWEVER, HE REFUSES IT, IT SHALL BE LOST TO HIM FOREVER.
I AGREE.
UTTANKA IS A WISE MAN. HE WILL KNOW AMRIT IN WHATEVER FORM IT IS GIVEN TO HIM.


MEANWHILE, UTTANKA WAS STILL THINKING ABOUT KRISHNA.
SUDDENLY—
FOOTSTEPS! IT MUST BE KRISHNA BRINGING ME WATER.
TO HIS DISMAY HE SAW A CHANDALA* APPROACHING HIM.
UTTANKA, I COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE YOU TORTURED BY THIRST. I HAVE BROUGHT SOME WATER FOR YOU. PLEASE ACCEPT IT.
UTTANKA WAS AGHAST. HE SHRANK AWAY FROM THE CHANDALA.
MY THROAT IS PARCHED WITH THIRST. BUT HOW CAN I ACCEPT WATER FROM HIM! O KRISHNA, WHAT A CRUEL JOKE TO PLAY ON ME!

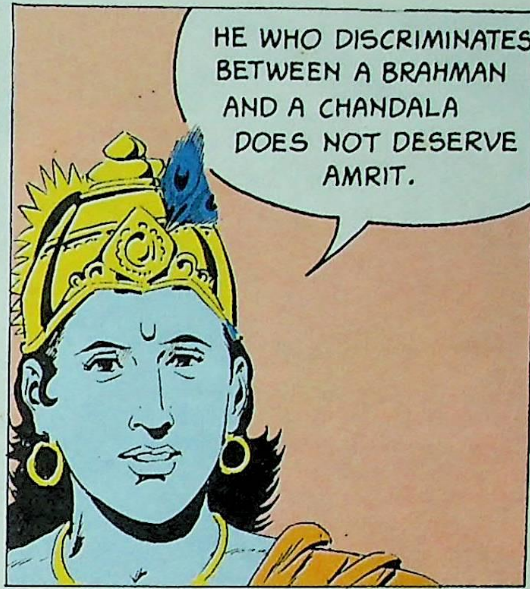
---

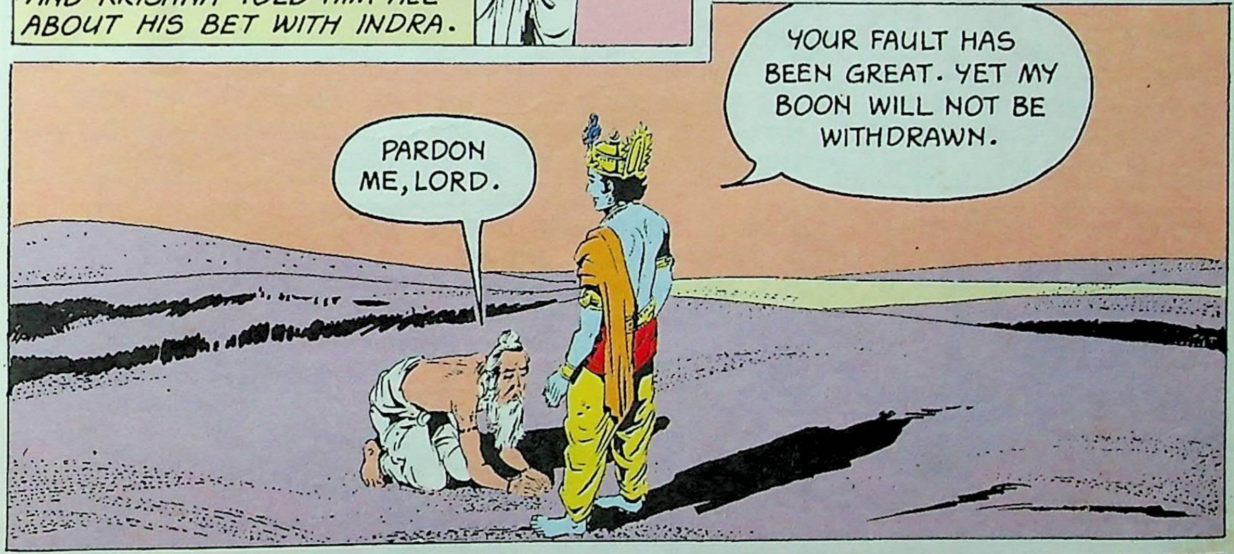
* AN OUTCASTE

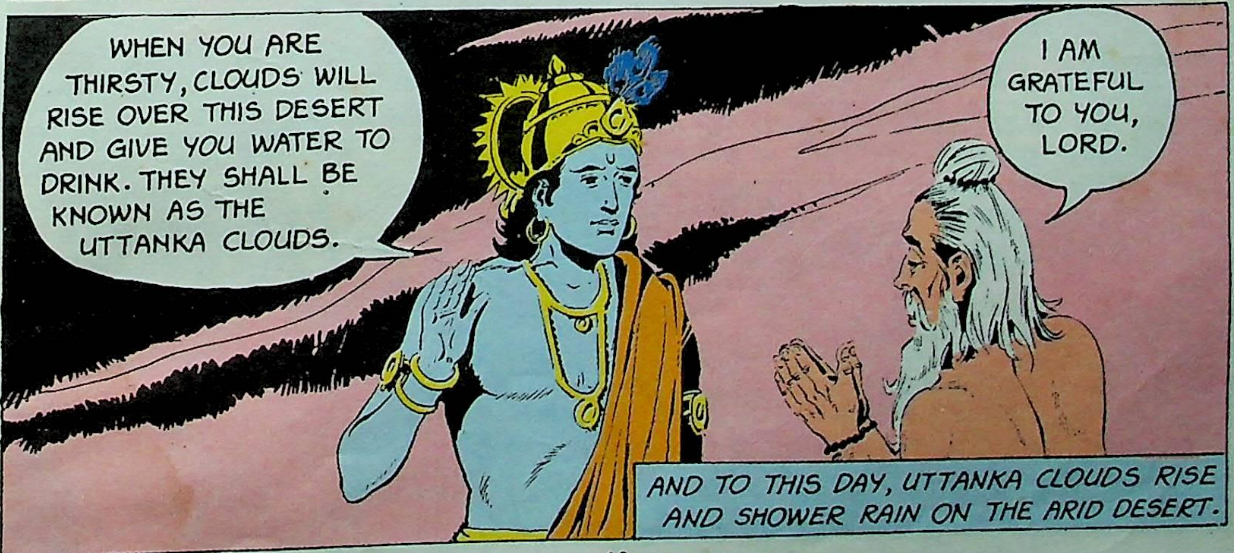

WHY DO YOU HESITATE? DRINK, UTTANKA, LEST YOU DIE OF THIRST.
UTTANKA FLEW INTO A RAGE.
WHAT! ACCEPT WATER FROM A CHANDALA! BEGONE! I'D RATHER DIE OF THIRST THAN TOUCH THAT WATER AND BE POLLUTED!
THE NEXT MOMENT THE CHANDALA HAD VANISHED.
BEFORE UTTANKA COULD COLLECT HIMSELF — WHO SHOULD STAND BEFORE HIM BUT KRISHNA!
OH, KRISHNA! IT WAS NOT FAIR TO SEND ME WATER THROUGH A CHANDALA!


THAT WAS NO CHANDALA. IT WAS INDRA BRINGING AMRIT FOR YOU. NOW YOU WILL NEVER RECEIVE IT IN THIS BIRTH!

AND KRISHNA TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT HIS BET WITH INDRA.

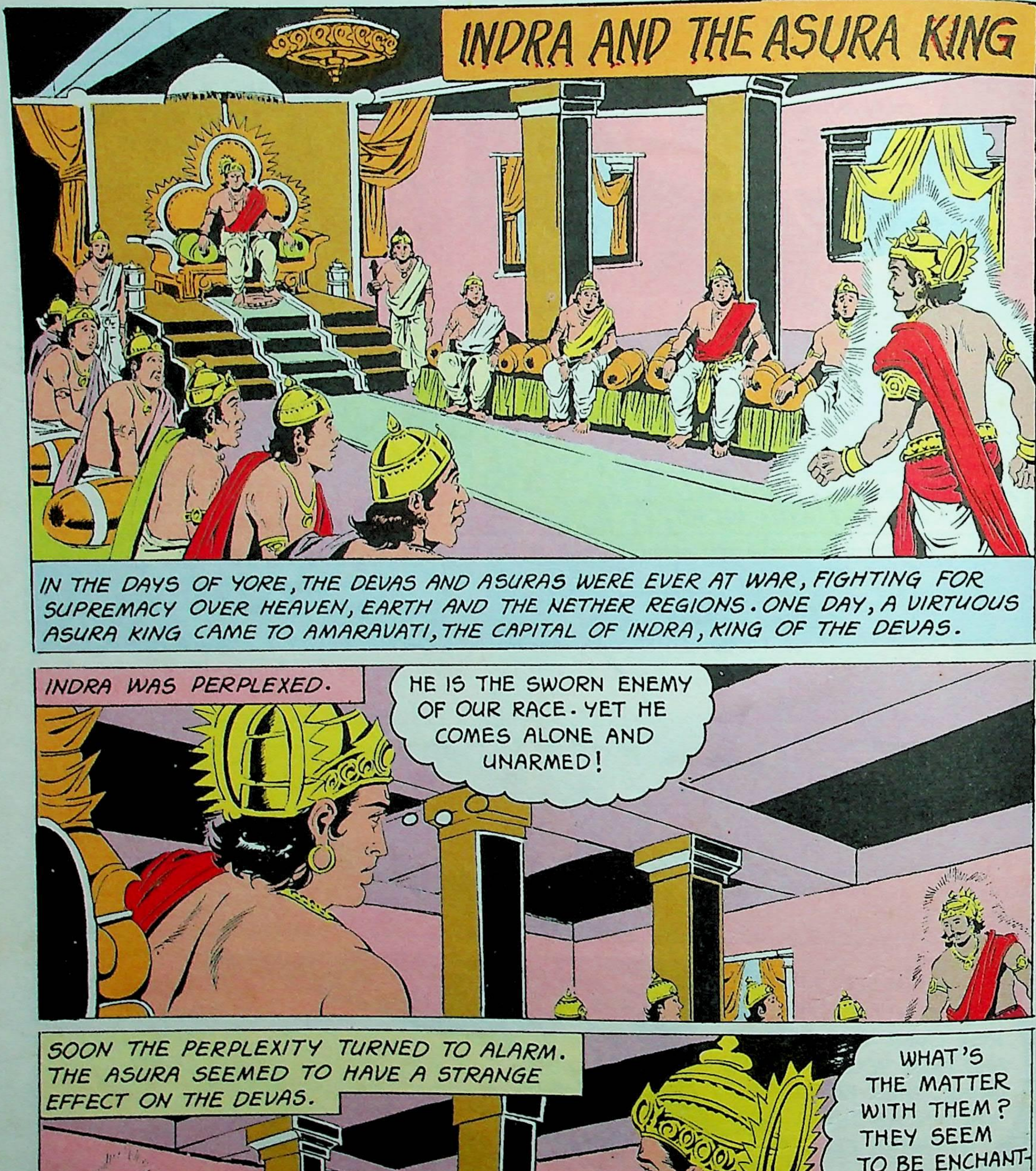

HE WHO DISCRIMINATES BETWEEN A BRAHMAN AND A CHANDALA DOES NOT DESERVE AMRIT.


YOUR FAULT HAS BEEN GREAT. YET MY BOON WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN.
PARDON ME, LORD.


WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY, CLOUDS WILL RISE OVER THIS DESERT AND GIVE YOU WATER TO DRINK. THEY SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE UTTANKA CLOUDS.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, LORD.

AND TO THIS DAY, UTTANKA CLOUDS RISE AND SHOWER RAIN ON THE ARID DESERT.

INDRA AND THE ASURA KING



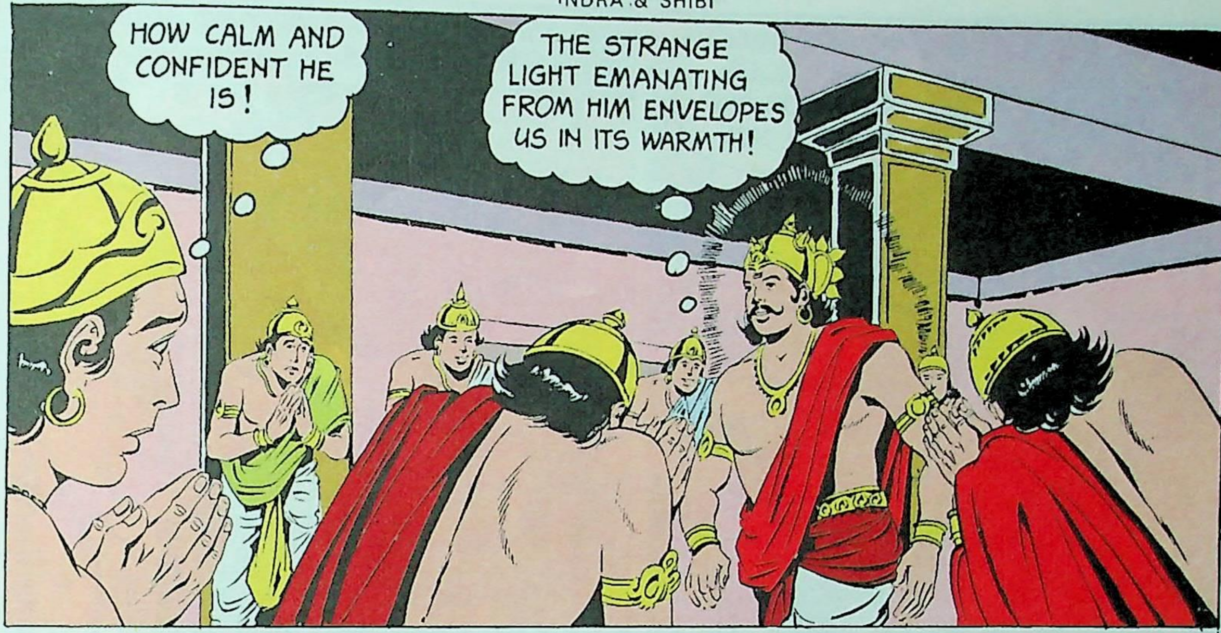
IN THE DAYS OF YORE, THE DEVAS AND ASURAS WERE EVER AT WAR, FIGHTING FOR SUPREMACY OVER HEAVEN, EARTH AND THE NETHER REGIONS. ONE DAY, A VIRTUOUS ASURA KING CAME TO AMARAVATI, THE CAPITAL OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

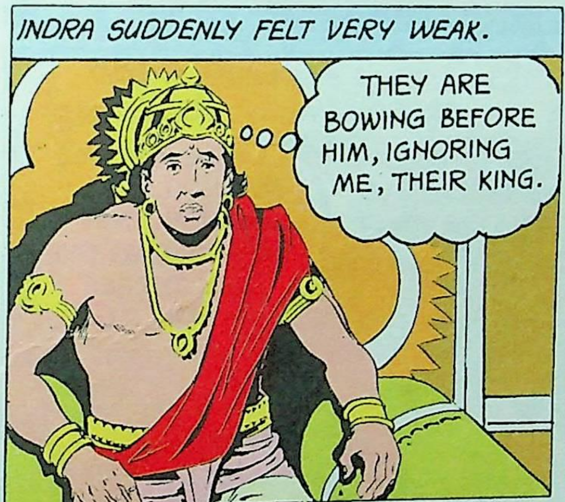
INDRA WAS PERPLEXED.

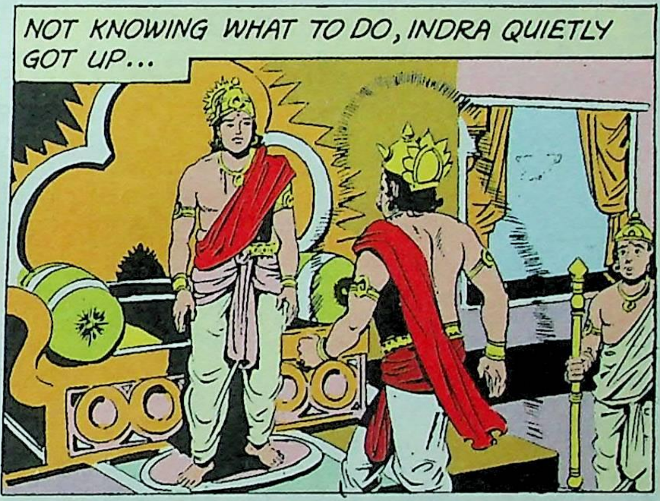
HE IS THE SWORN ENEMY OF OUR RACE. YET HE COMES ALONE AND UNARMED!

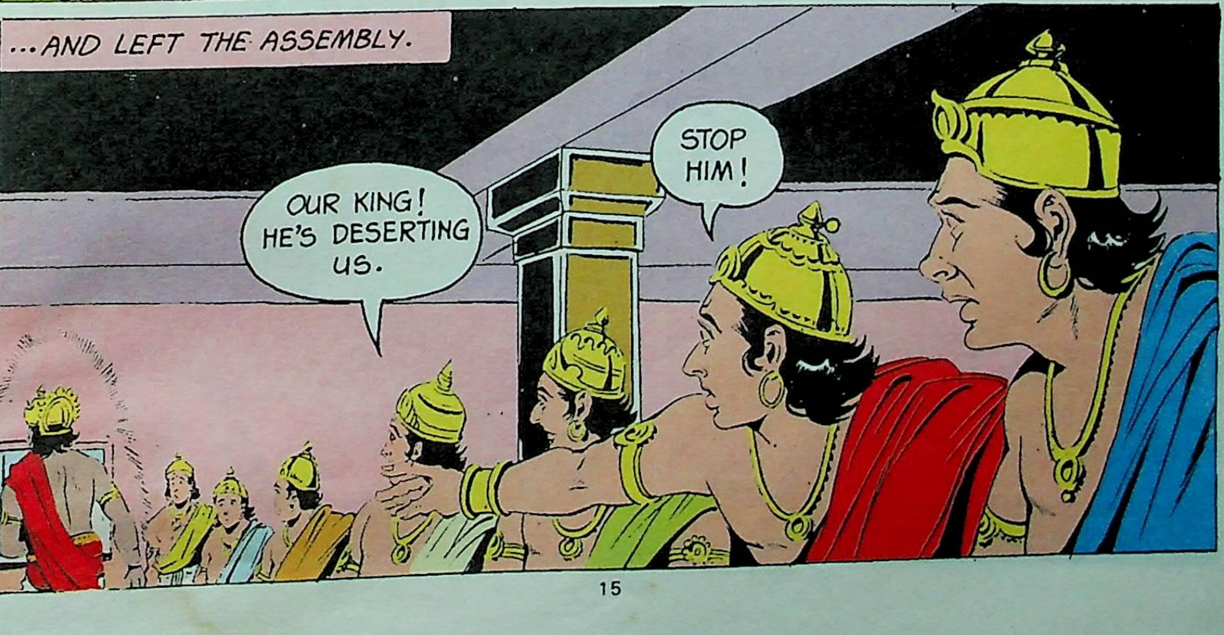
SOON THE PERPLEXITY TURNED TO ALARM. THE ASURA SEEMED TO HAVE A STRANGE EFFECT ON THE DEVAS.

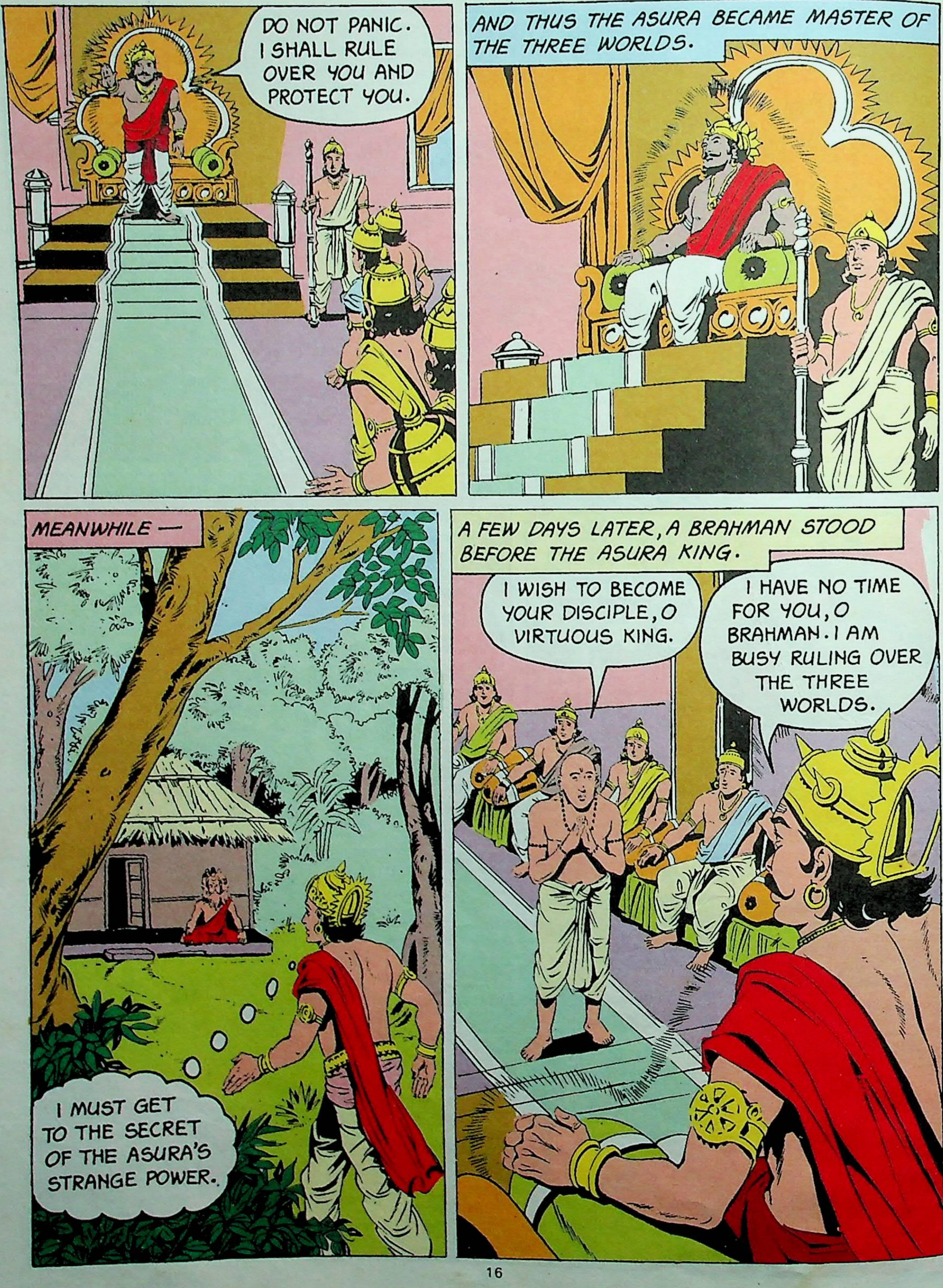
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THEM? THEY SEEM TO BE ENCHANTED BY HIM!

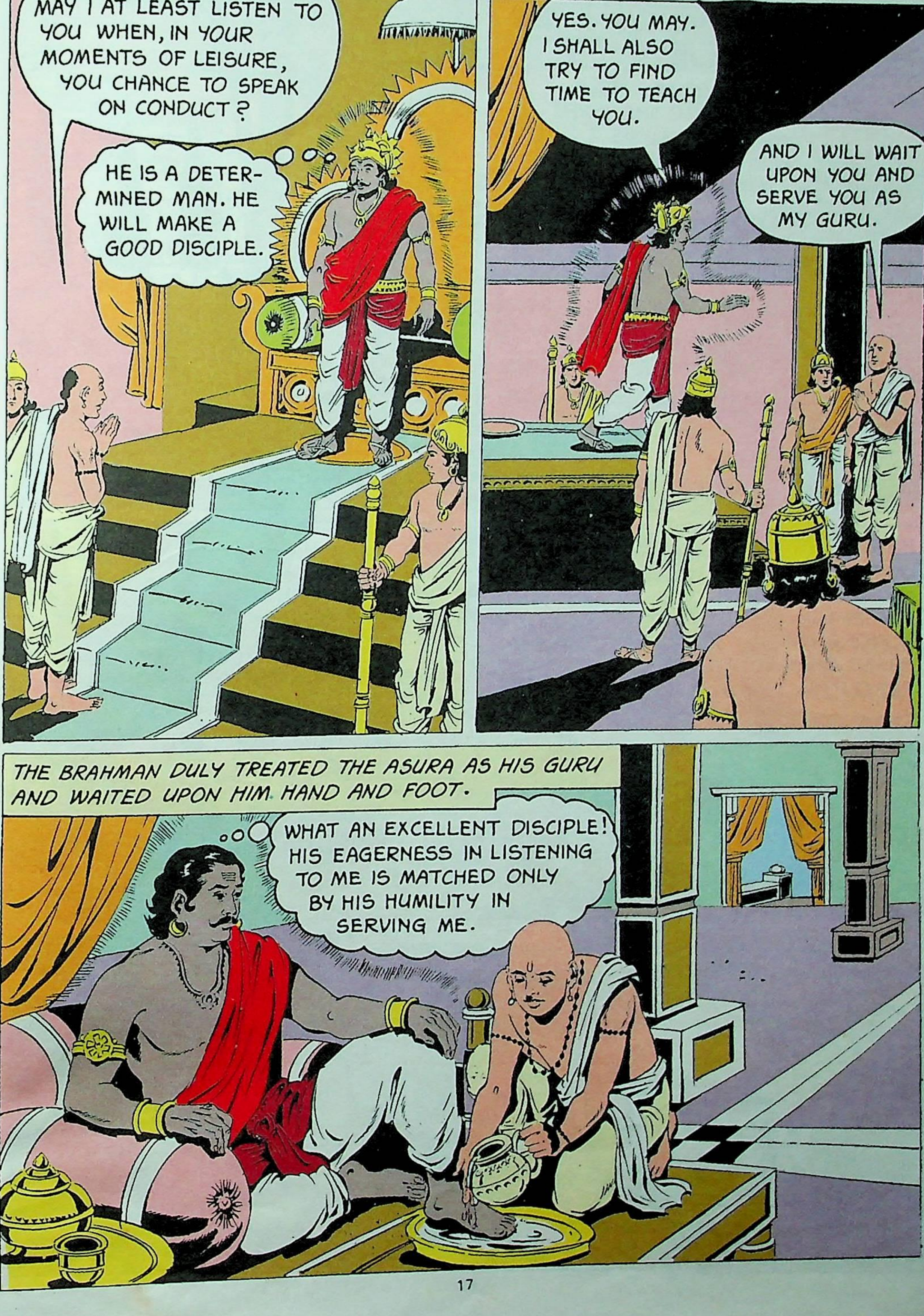

HOW CALM AND CONFIDENT HE IS!
THE STRANGE LIGHT EMANATING FROM HIM ENVELOPES US IN ITS WARMTH!

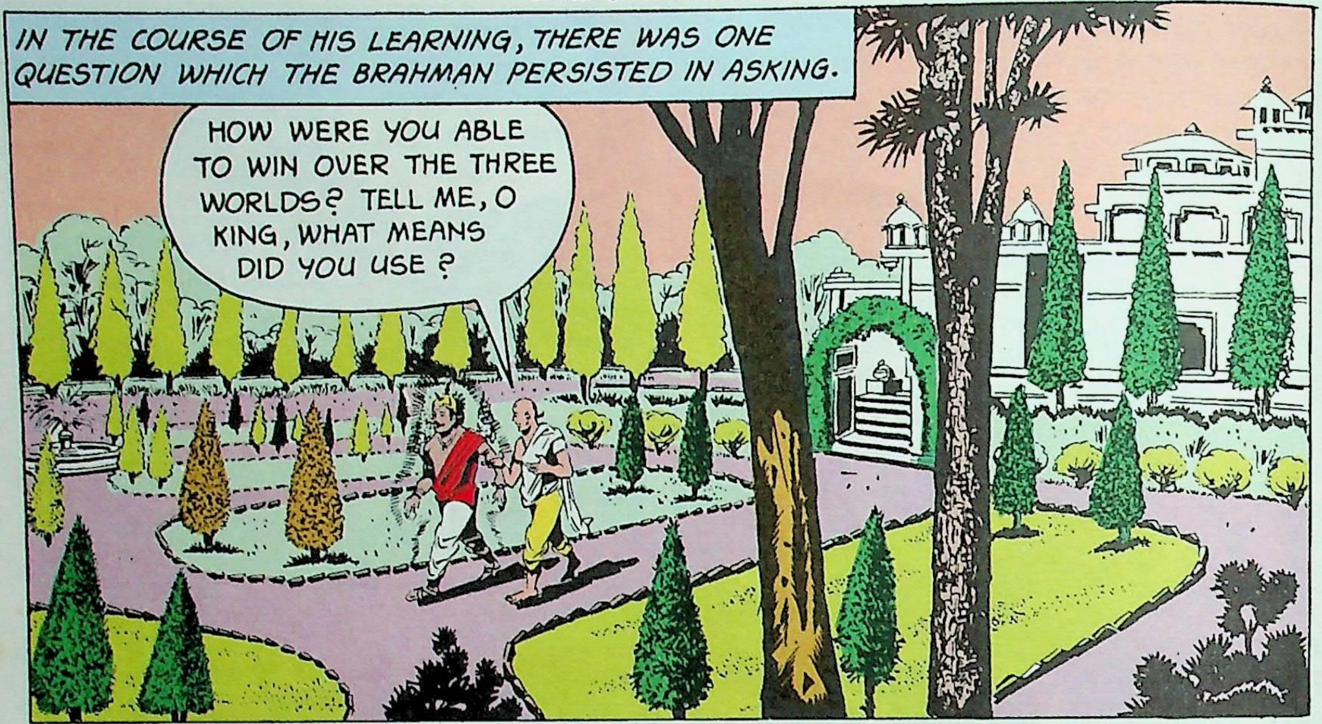

INDRA SUDDENLY FELT VERY WEAK.
THEY ARE BOWING BEFORE HIM, IGNORING ME, THEIR KING.

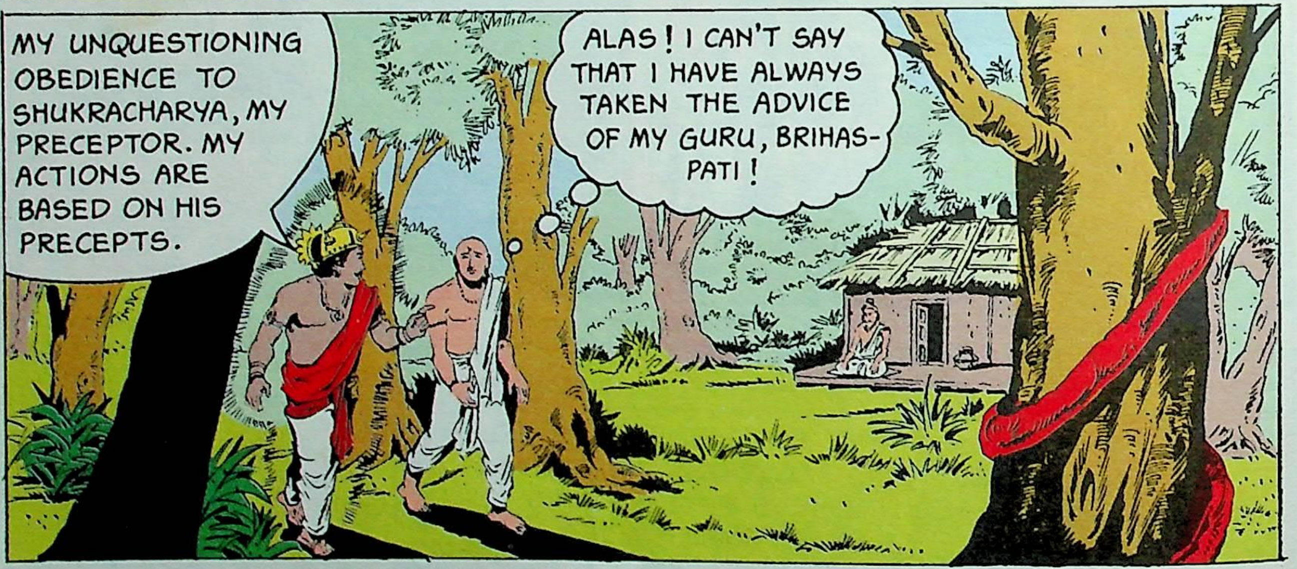

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO, INDRA QUIETLY GOT UP...

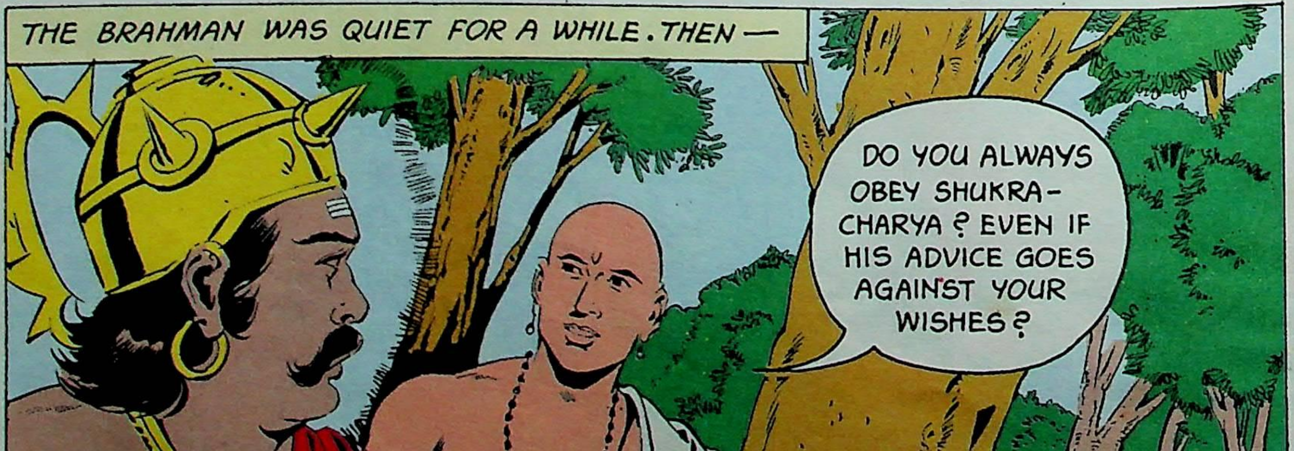

...AND LEFT THE ASSEMBLY.
OUR KING! HE'S DESERTING US.
STOP HIM!

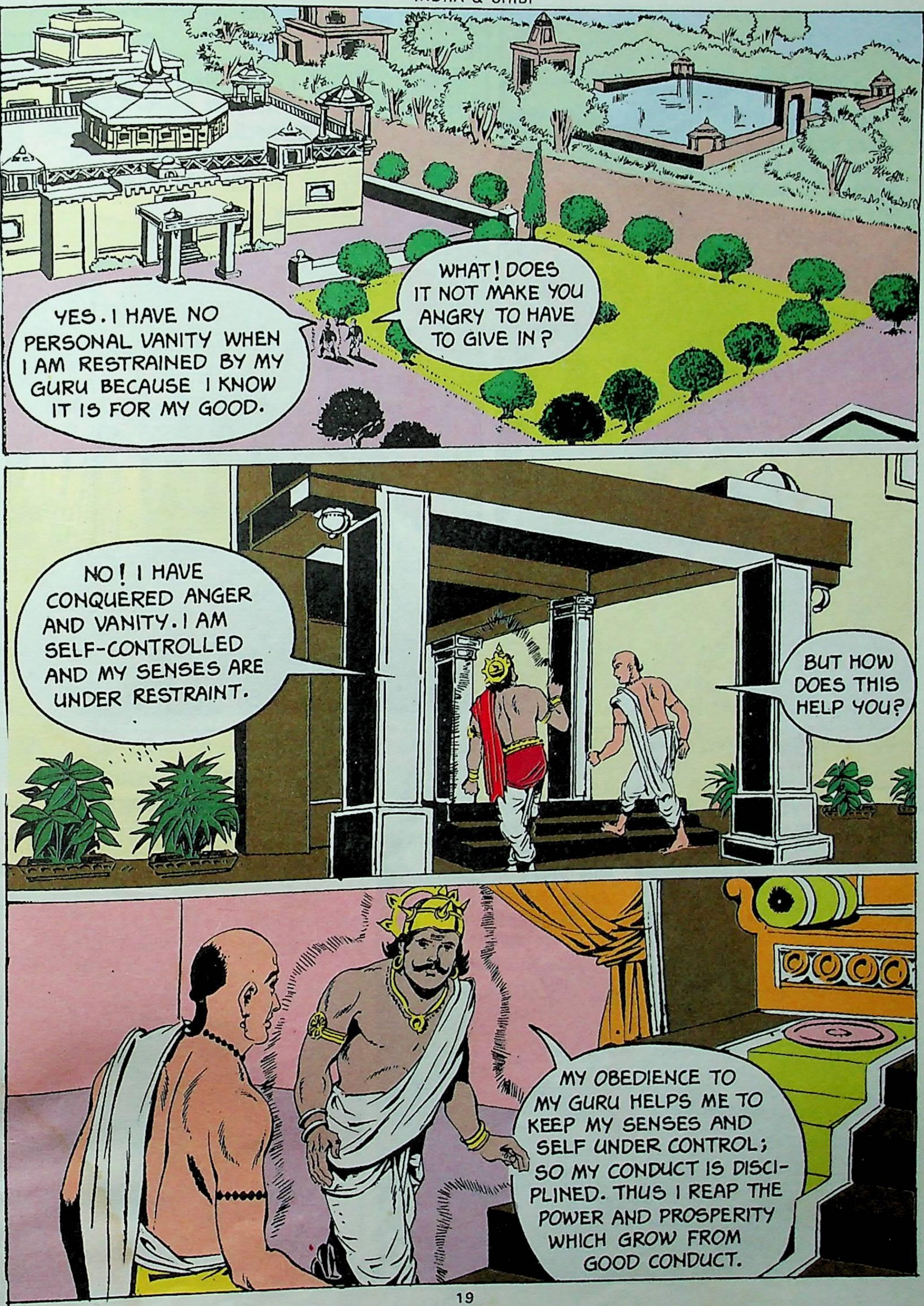

DO NOT PANIC. I SHALL RULE OVER YOU AND PROTECT YOU.
AND THUS THE ASURA BECAME MASTER OF THE THREE WORLDS.
MEANWHILE —
I MUST GET TO THE SECRET OF THE ASURA'S STRANGE POWER.
A FEW DAYS LATER, A BRAHMAN STOOD BEFORE THE ASURA KING.
I WISH TO BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE, O VIRTUOUS KING.
I HAVE NO TIME FOR YOU, O BRAHMAN. I AM BUSY RULING OVER THE THREE WORLDS.

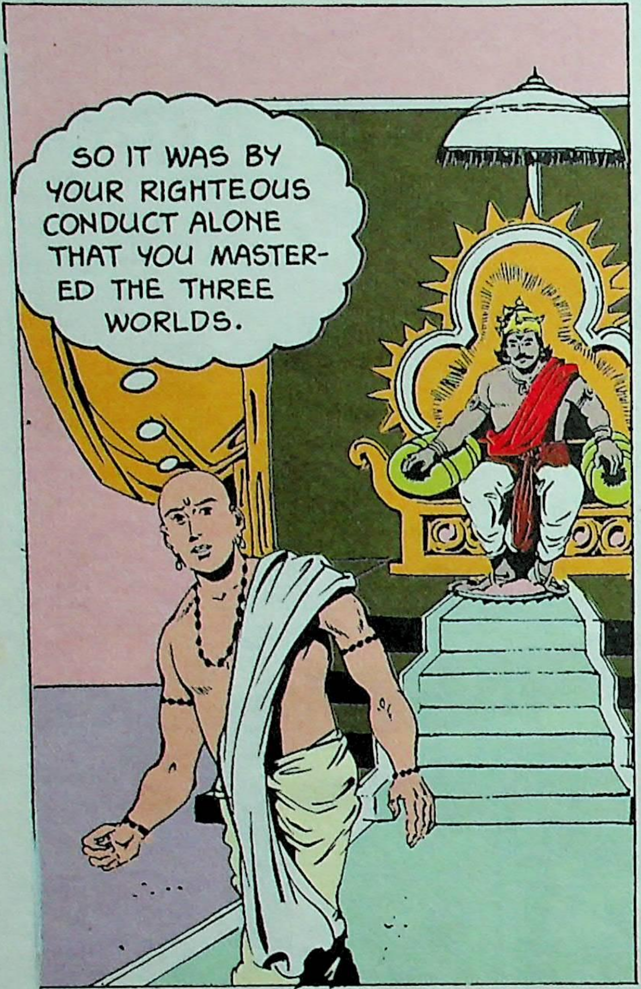

MAY I AT LEAST LISTEN TO YOU WHEN, IN YOUR MOMENTS OF LEISURE, YOU CHANCE TO SPEAK ON CONDUCT ?
HE IS A DETERMINED MAN. HE WILL MAKE A GOOD DISCIPLE.
YES. YOU MAY. I SHALL ALSO TRY TO FIND TIME TO TEACH YOU.
AND I WILL WAIT UPON YOU AND SERVE YOU AS MY GURU.
THE BRAHMAN DULY TREATED THE ASURA AS HIS GURU AND WAITED UPON HIM HAND AND FOOT.
WHAT AN EXCELLENT DISCIPLE! HIS EAGERNESS IN LISTENING TO ME IS MATCHED ONLY BY HIS HUMILITY IN SERVING ME.

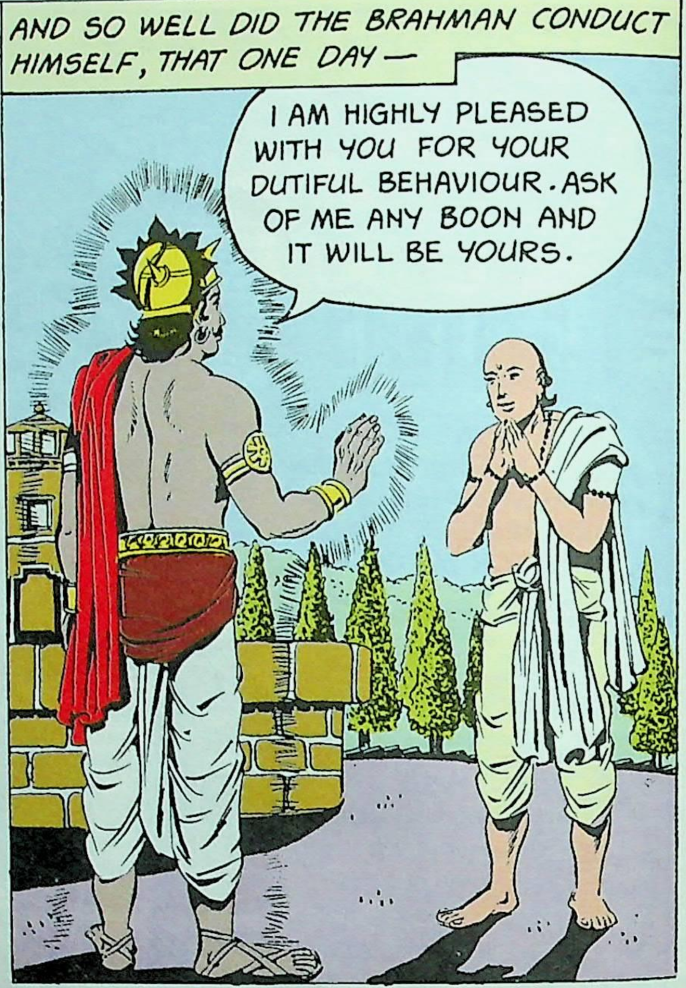

IN THE COURSE OF HIS LEARNING, THERE WAS ONE QUESTION WHICH THE BRAHMAN PERSISTED IN ASKING.
HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO WIN OVER THE THREE WORLDS? TELL ME, O KING, WHAT MEANS DID YOU USE?

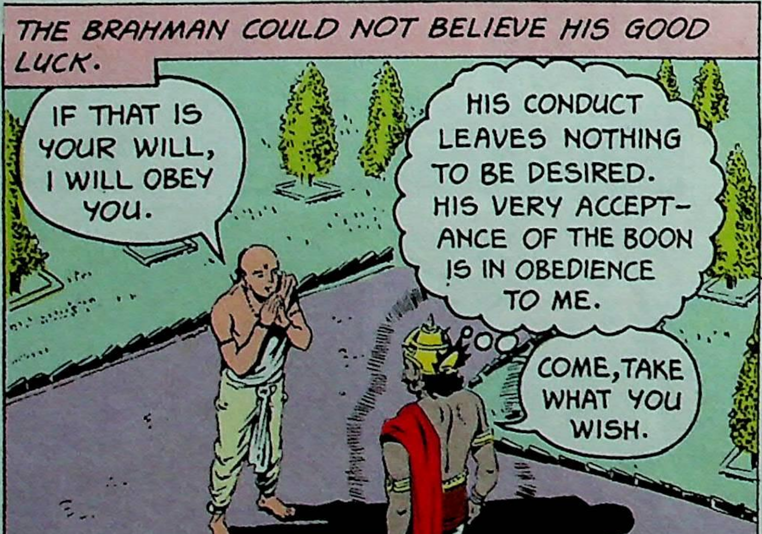

MY UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE TO SHUKRACHARYA, MY PRECEPTOR. MY ACTIONS ARE BASED ON HIS PRECEPTS.
ALAS! I CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN THE ADVICE OF MY GURU, BRIHASPATI!

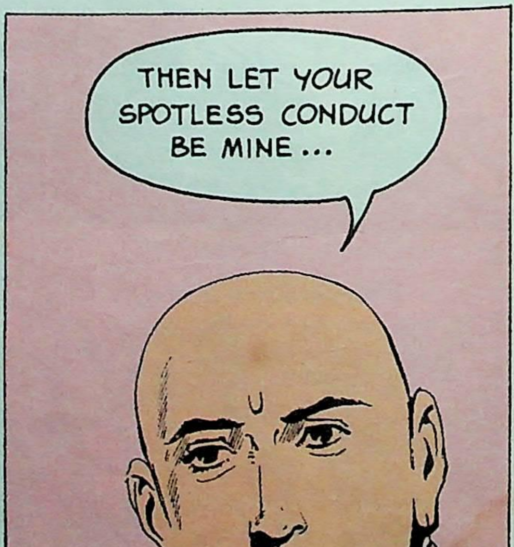

THE BRAHMAN WAS QUIET FOR A WHILE. THEN —
DO YOU ALWAYS OBEY SHUKRACHARYA? EVEN IF HIS ADVICE GOES AGAINST YOUR WISHES?

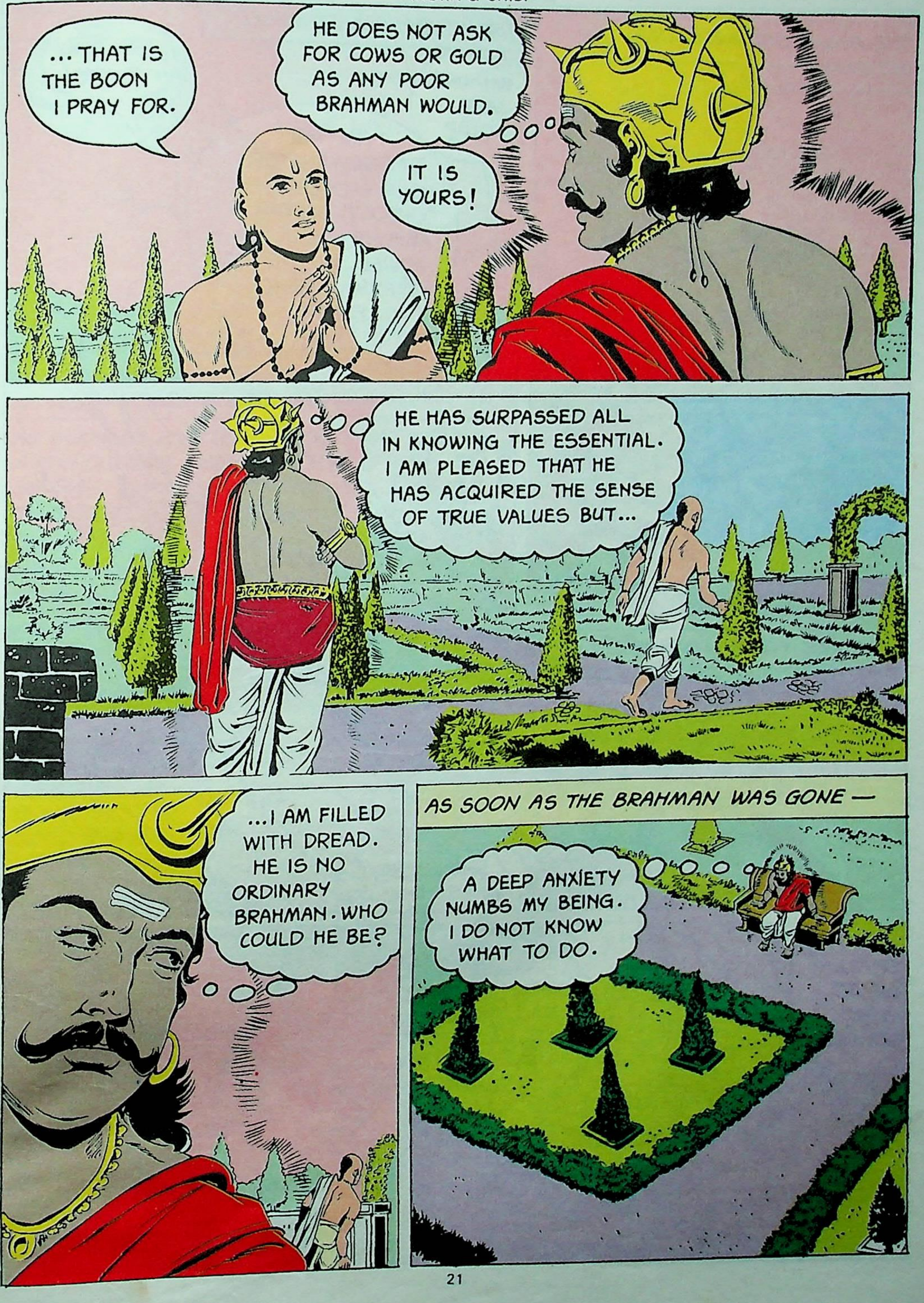

WHAT! DOES IT NOT MAKE YOU ANGRY TO HAVE TO GIVE IN?
YES. I HAVE NO PERSONAL VANITY WHEN I AM RESTRAINED BY MY GURU BECAUSE I KNOW IT IS FOR MY GOOD.
NO! I HAVE CONQUERED ANGER AND VANITY. I AM SELF-CONTROLLED AND MY SENSES ARE UNDER RESTRAINT.
BUT HOW DOES THIS HELP YOU?
MY OBEDIENCE TO MY GURU HELPS ME TO KEEP MY SENSES AND SELF UNDER CONTROL; SO MY CONDUCT IS DISCIPLINED. THUS I REAP THE POWER AND PROSPERITY WHICH GROW FROM GOOD CONDUCT.

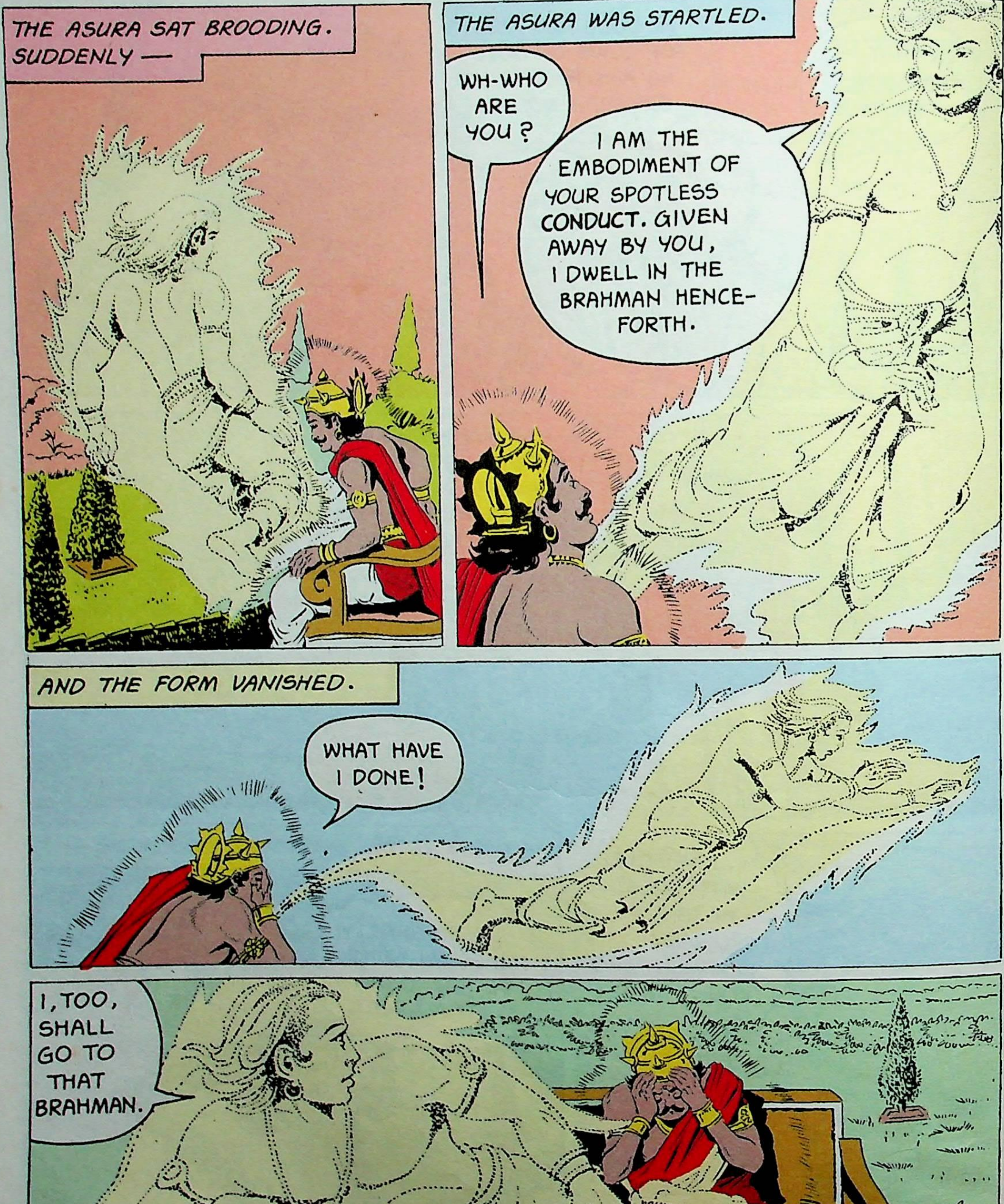

SO IT WAS BY YOUR RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT ALONE THAT YOU MASTERED THE THREE WORLDS.

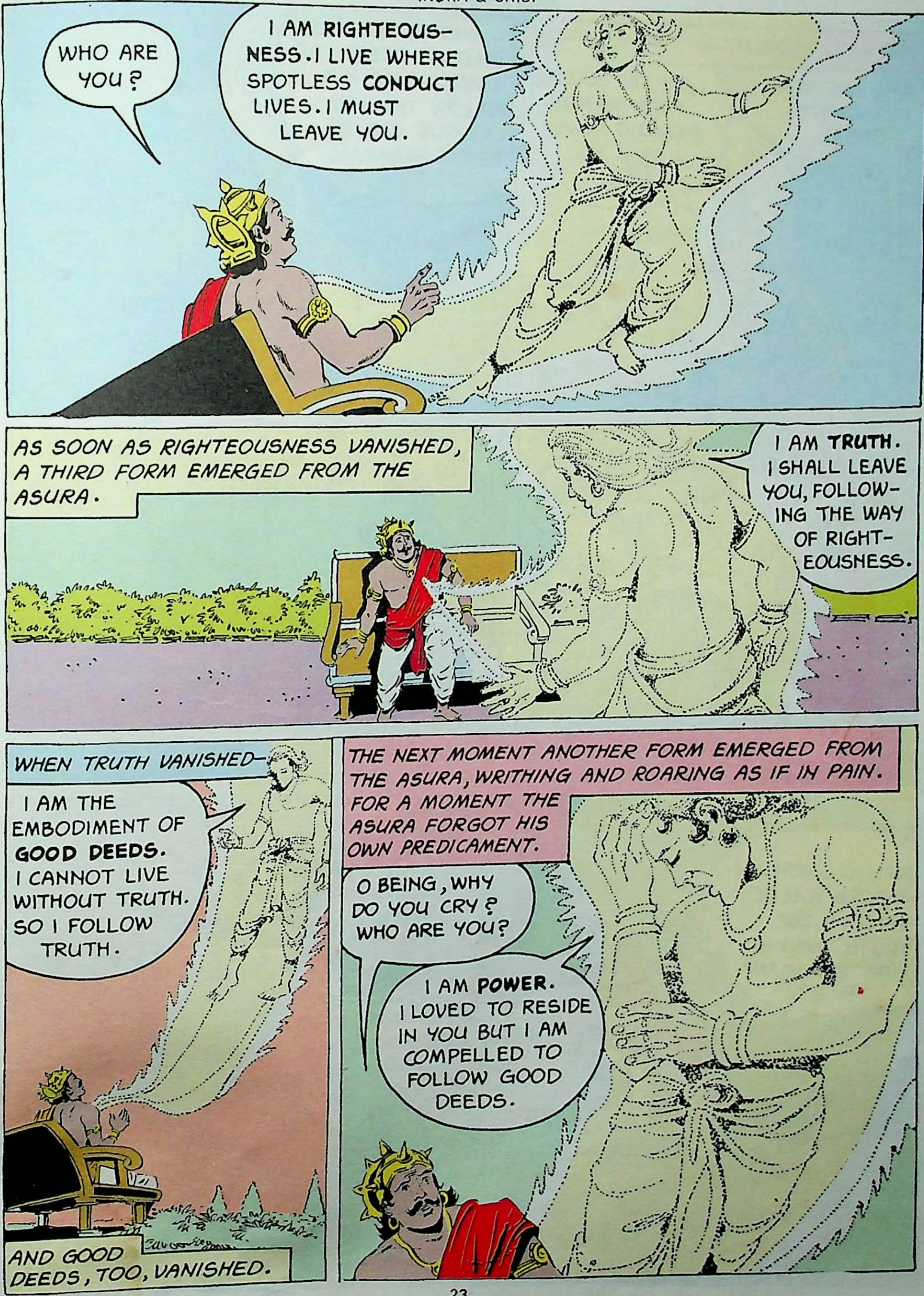

AND SO WELL DID THE BRAHMAN CONDUCT HIMSELF, THAT ONE DAY —
I AM HIGHLY PLEASED WITH YOU FOR YOUR DUTIFUL BEHAVIOUR. ASK OF ME ANY BOON AND IT WILL BE YOURS.

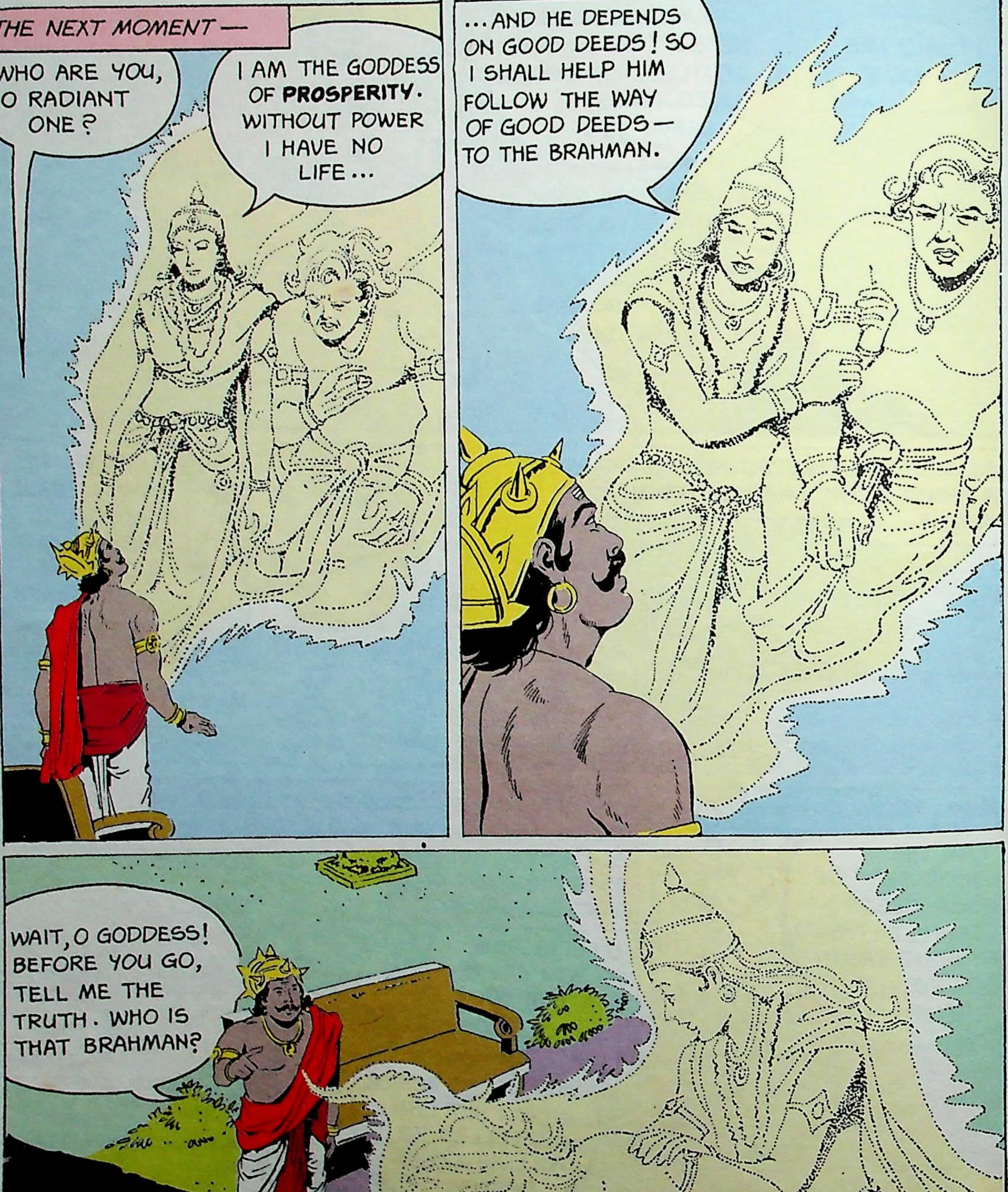

THE BRAHMAN COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS GOOD LUCK.
IF THAT IS YOUR WILL, I WILL OBEY YOU.
HIS CONDUCT LEAVES NOTHING TO BE DESIRED. HIS VERY ACCEPTANCE OF THE BOON IS IN OBEDIENCE TO ME.
COME, TAKE WHAT YOU WISH.

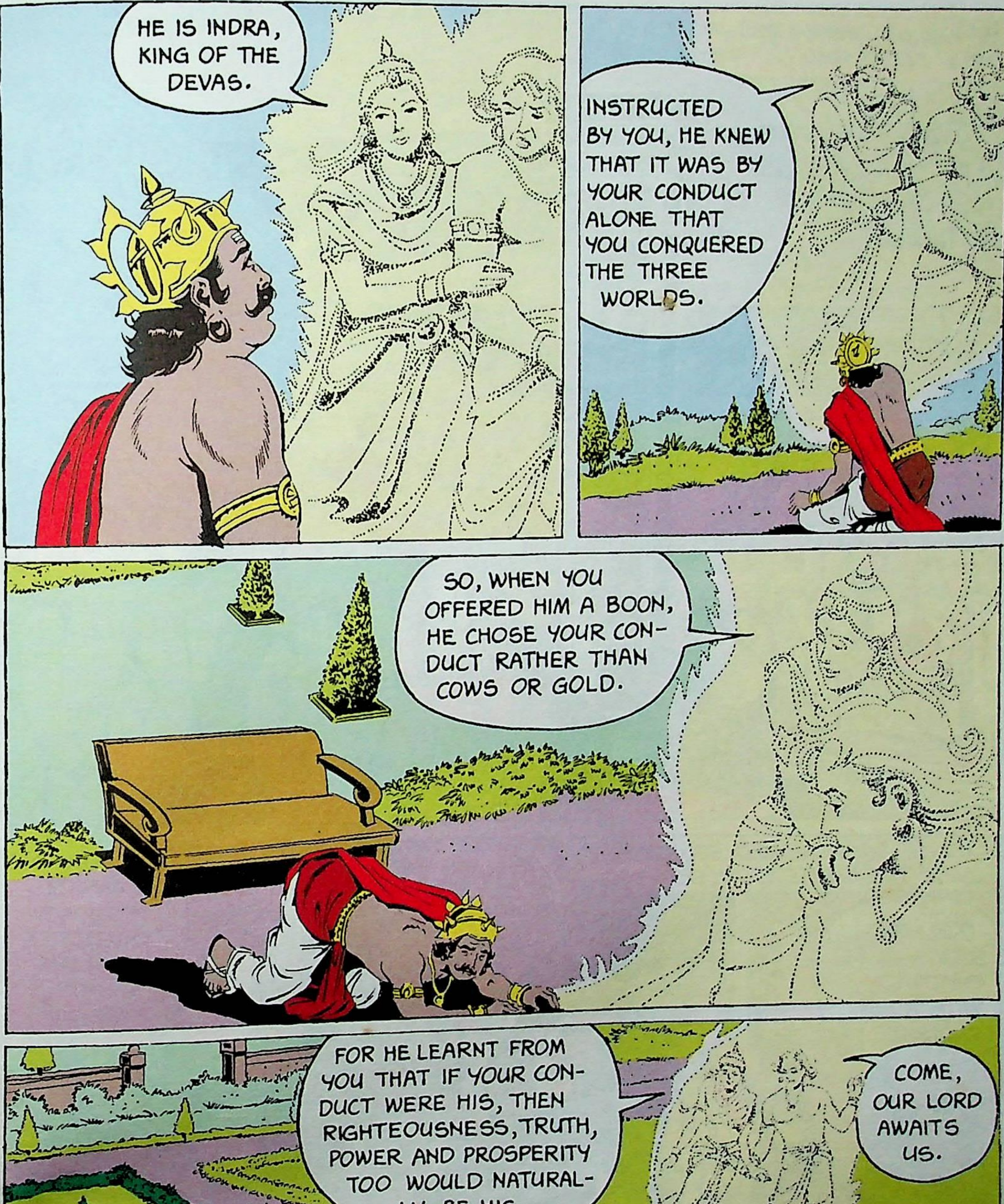

THEN LET YOUR SPOTLESS CONDUCT BE MINE...

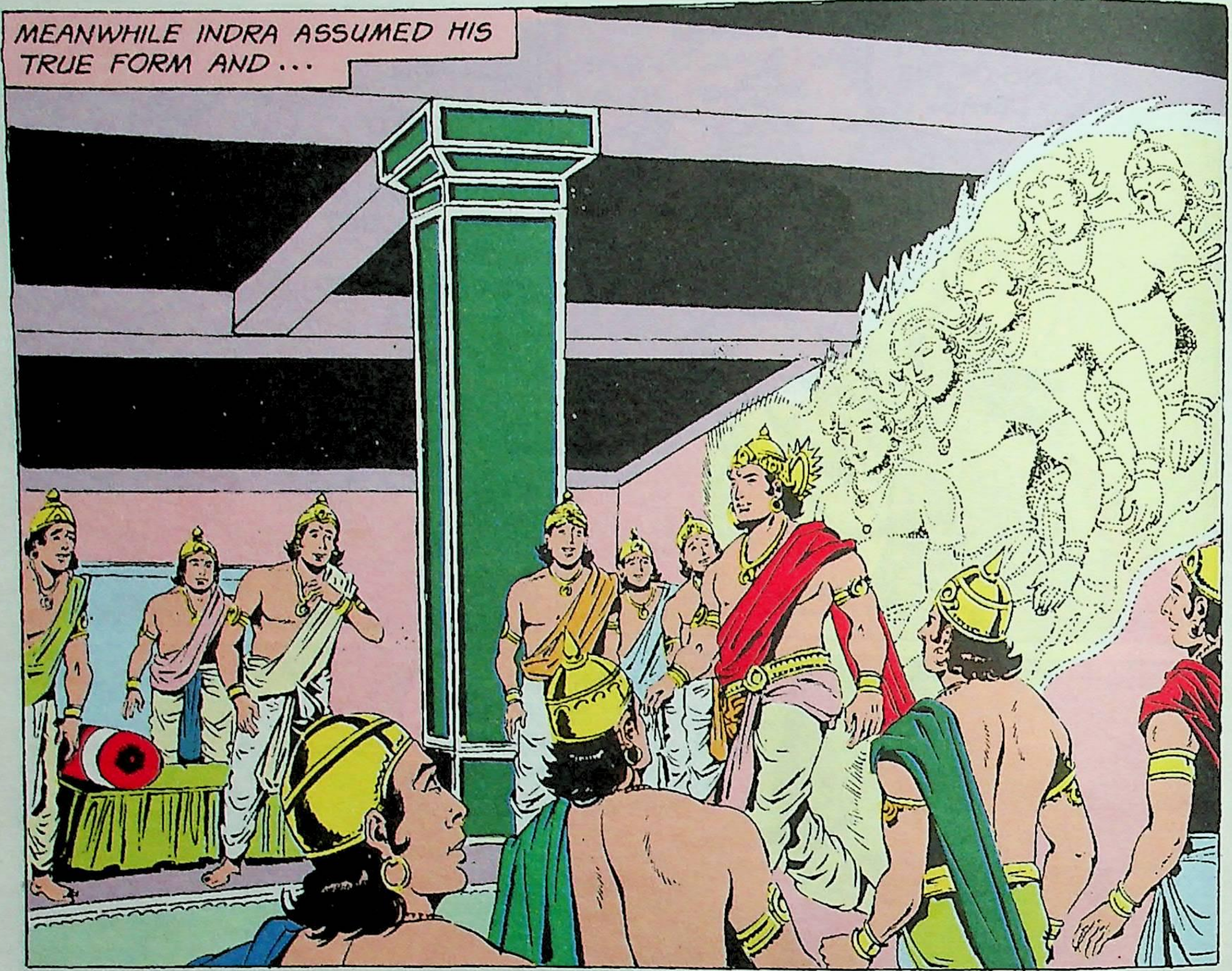

... THAT IS THE BOON I PRAY FOR.
HE DOES NOT ASK FOR COWS OR GOLD AS ANY POOR BRAHMAN WOULD.
IT IS YOURS!
HE HAS SURPASSED ALL IN KNOWING THE ESSENTIAL. I AM PLEASED THAT HE HAS ACQUIRED THE SENSE OF TRUE VALUES BUT...
...I AM FILLED WITH DREAD. HE IS NO ORDINARY BRAHMAN. WHO COULD HE BE?
AS SOON AS THE BRAHMAN WAS GONE —
A DEEP ANXIETY NUMBS MY BEING. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO.

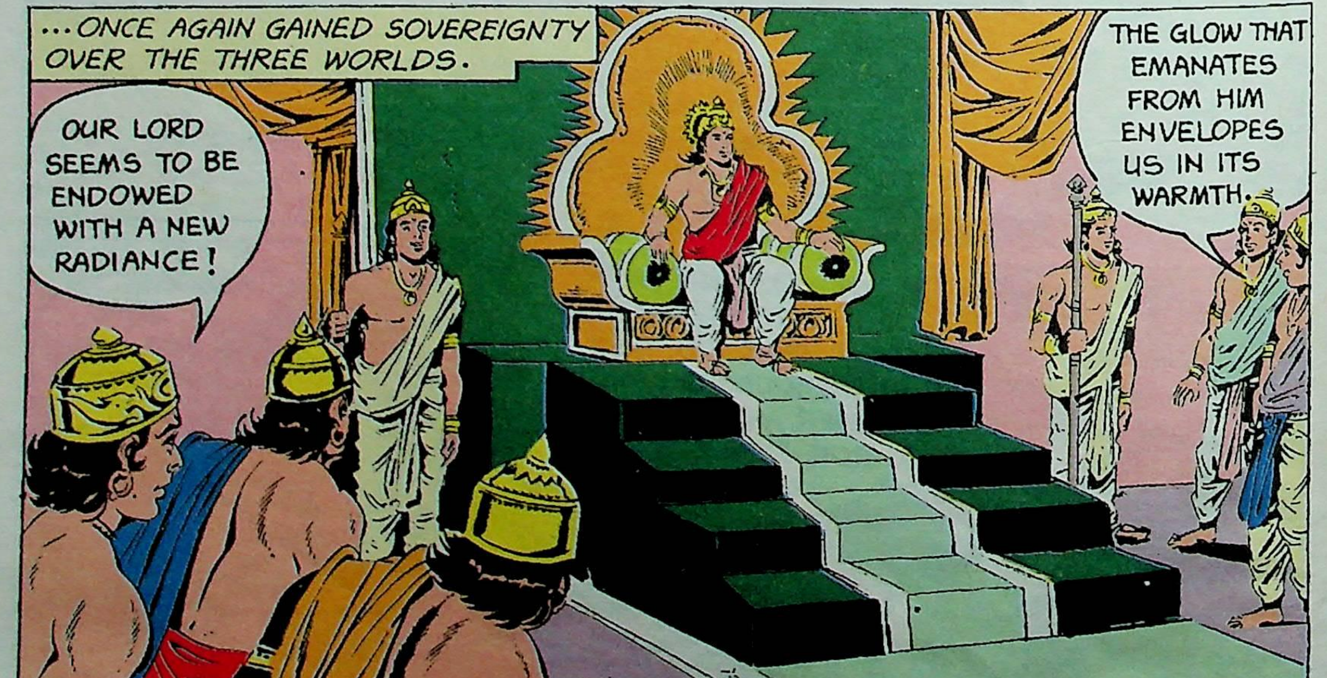

THE ASURA SAT BROODING. SUDDENLY —
THE ASURA WAS STARTLED.
WH-WHO ARE YOU?
I AM THE EMBODIMENT OF YOUR SPOTLESS CONDUCT. GIVEN AWAY BY YOU, I DWELL IN THE BRAHMAN HENCEFORTH.
AND THE FORM VANISHED.
WHAT HAVE I DONE!
I, TOO, SHALL GO TO THAT BRAHMAN.


WHO ARE YOU?
I AM **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. I LIVE WHERE SPOTLESS **CONDUCT** LIVES. I MUST LEAVE YOU.
AS SOON AS RIGHTEOUSNESS VANISHED, A THIRD FORM EMERGED FROM THE ASURA.
I AM **TRUTH**. I SHALL LEAVE YOU, FOLLOWING THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.
WHEN TRUTH VANISHED—
I AM THE EMBODIMENT OF **GOOD DEEDS.** I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT TRUTH. SO I FOLLOW TRUTH.
AND GOOD DEEDS, TOO, VANISHED.
THE NEXT MOMENT ANOTHER FORM EMERGED FROM THE ASURA, WRITHING AND ROARING AS IF IN PAIN. FOR A MOMENT THE ASURA FORGOT HIS OWN PREDICAMENT.
O BEING, WHY DO YOU CRY? WHO ARE YOU?
I AM **POWER.** I LOVED TO RESIDE IN YOU BUT I AM COMPELLED TO FOLLOW GOOD DEEDS.

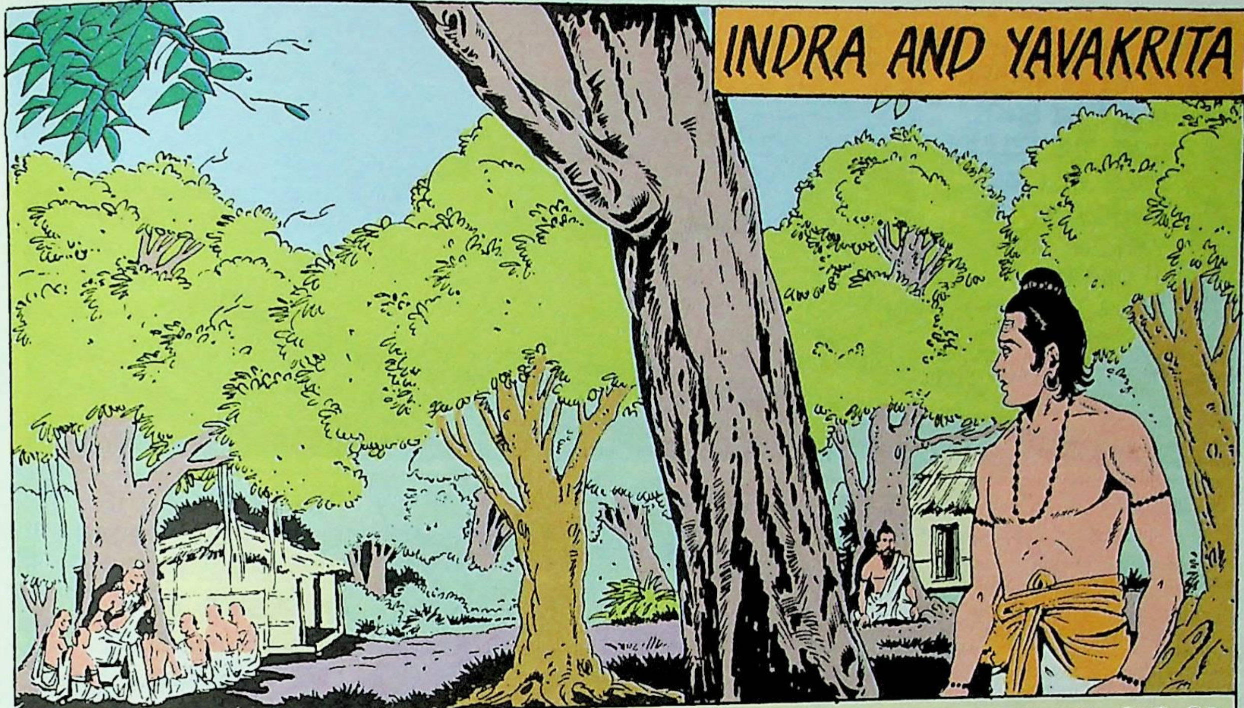

THE NEXT MOMENT —
WHO ARE YOU, O RADIANT ONE ?
I AM THE GODDESS OF **PROSPERITY**. WITHOUT POWER I HAVE NO LIFE ...
... AND HE DEPENDS ON GOOD DEEDS ! SO I SHALL HELP HIM FOLLOW THE WAY OF GOOD DEEDS — TO THE BRAHMAN.
WAIT, O GODDESS! BEFORE YOU GO, TELL ME THE TRUTH. WHO IS THAT BRAHMAN?


HE IS INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.
INSTRUCTED BY YOU, HE KNEW THAT IT WAS BY YOUR CONDUCT ALONE THAT YOU CONQUERED THE THREE WORLDS.
SO, WHEN YOU OFFERED HIM A BOON, HE CHOSE YOUR CONDUCT RATHER THAN COWS OR GOLD.
FOR HE LEARNT FROM YOU THAT IF YOUR CONDUCT WERE HIS, THEN RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH, POWER AND PROSPERITY TOO WOULD NATURALLY BE HIS.
COME, OUR LORD AWAITS US.


MEANWHILE INDRA ASSUMED HIS TRUE FORM AND ...

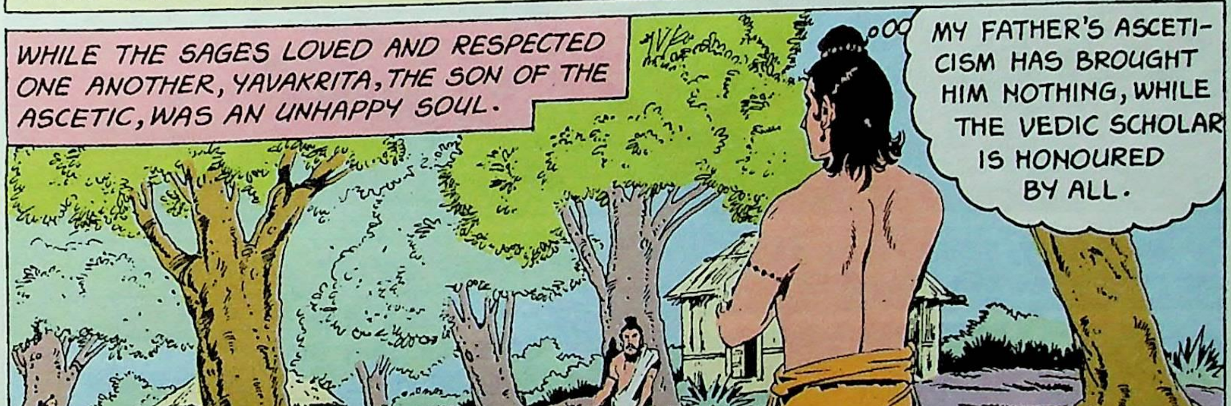

...ONCE AGAIN GAINED SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE THREE WORLDS.
OUR LORD SEEMS TO BE ENDOWED WITH A NEW RADIANCE!
THE GLOW THAT EMANATES FROM HIM ENVELOPES US IN ITS WARMTH.

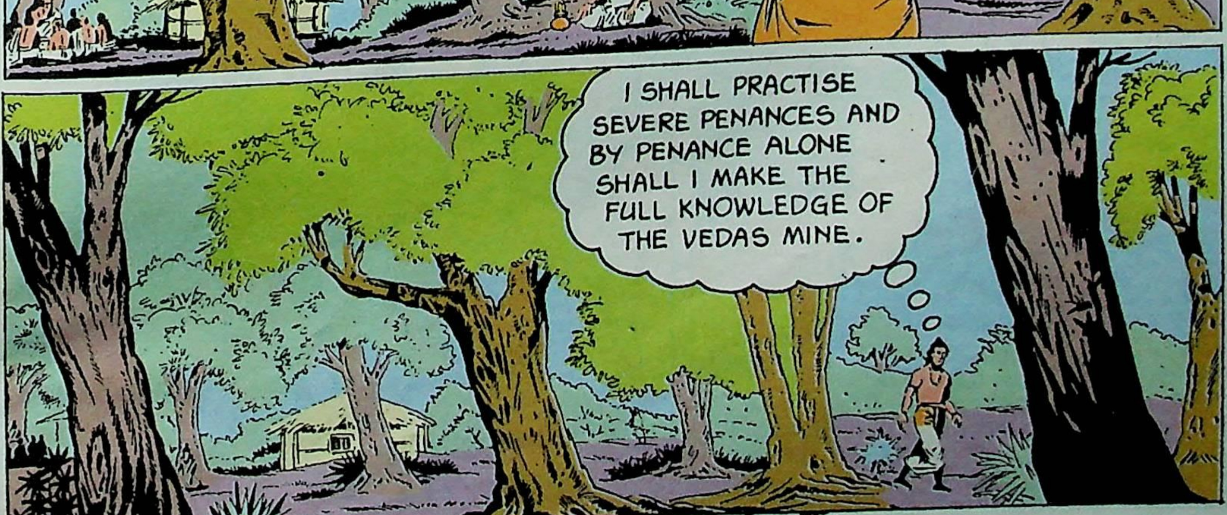
INDRA AND YAVAKRITA

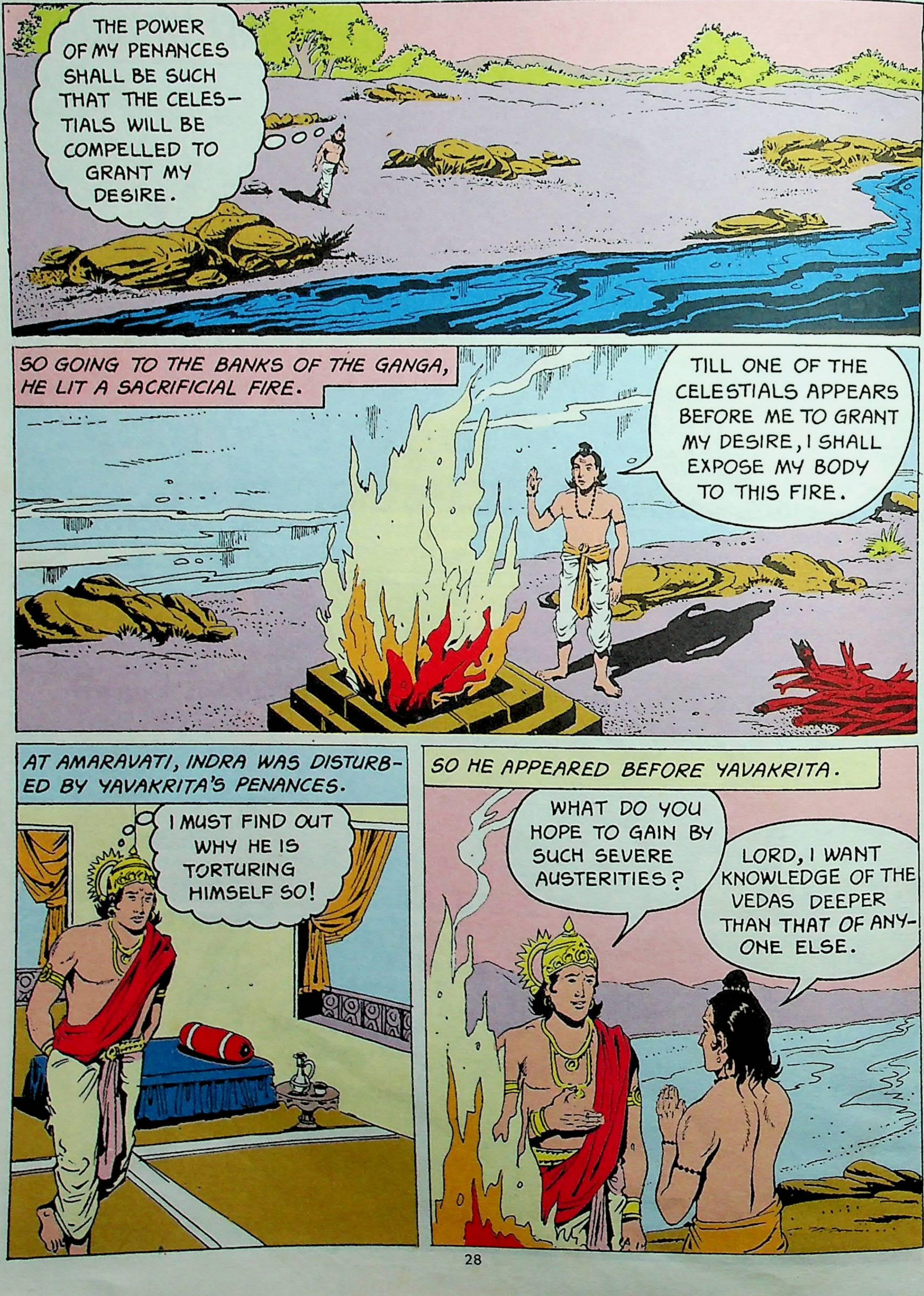


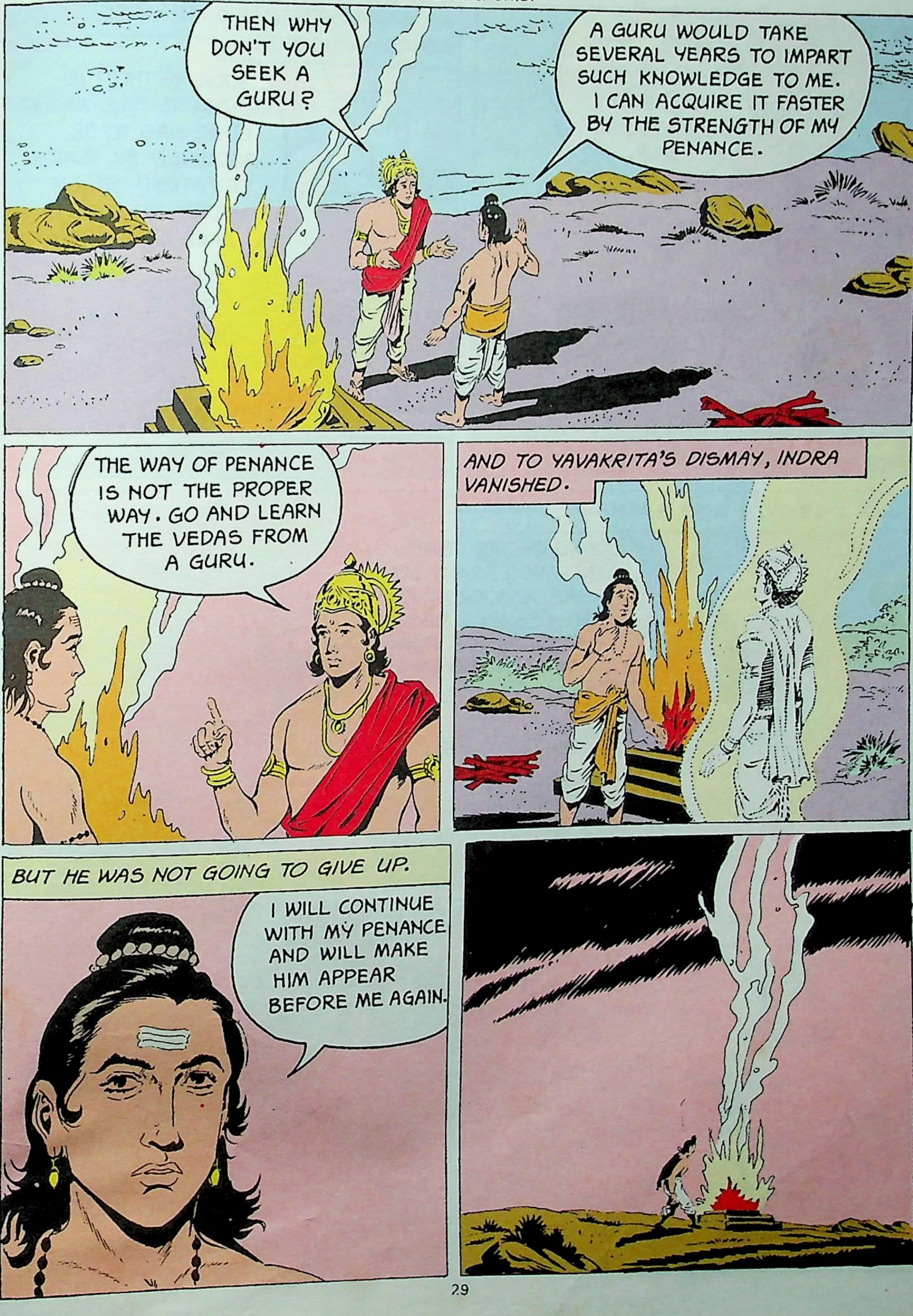
IN THE DAYS OF YORE, THERE LIVED TWO SAGES WHO WERE CLOSE FRIENDS. ONE OF THEM WAS A RENOWNED VEDIC SCHOLAR AND THE OTHER, AN ASCETIC.

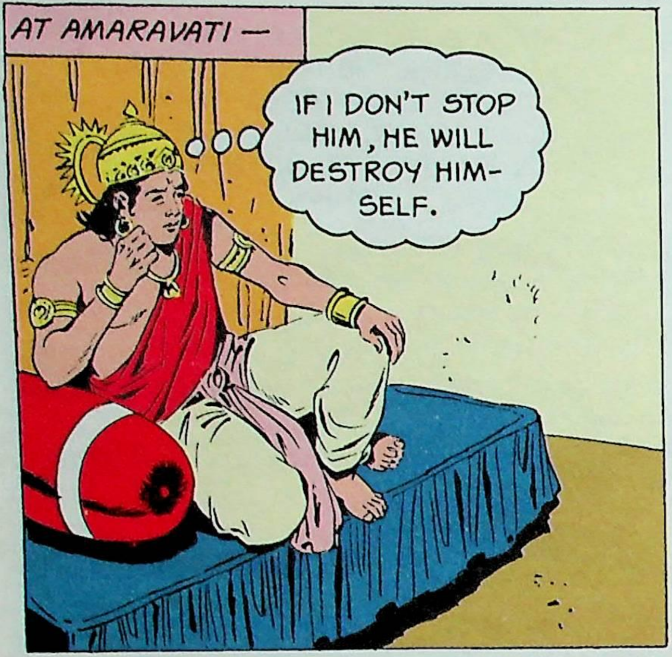
WHILE THE SAGES LOVED AND RESPECTED ONE ANOTHER, YAVAKRITA, THE SON OF THE ASCETIC, WAS AN UNHAPPY SOUL.

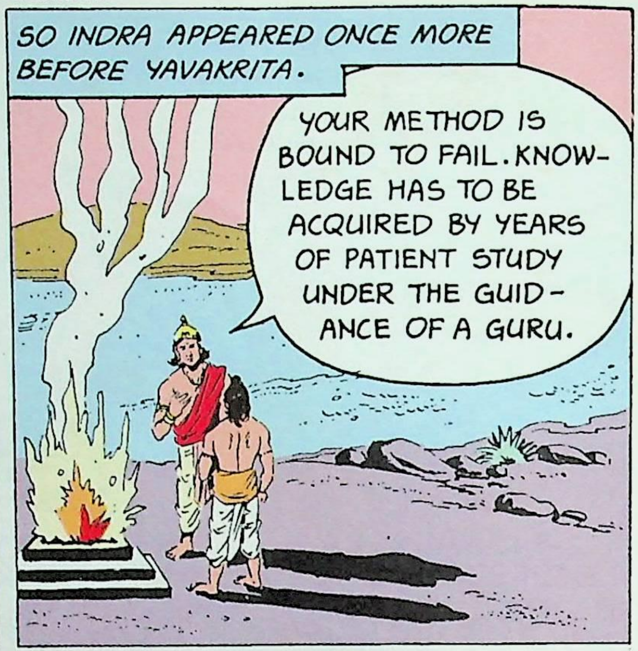

MY FATHER'S ASCETICISM HAS BROUGHT HIM NOTHING, WHILE THE VEDIC SCHOLAR IS HONOURED BY ALL.

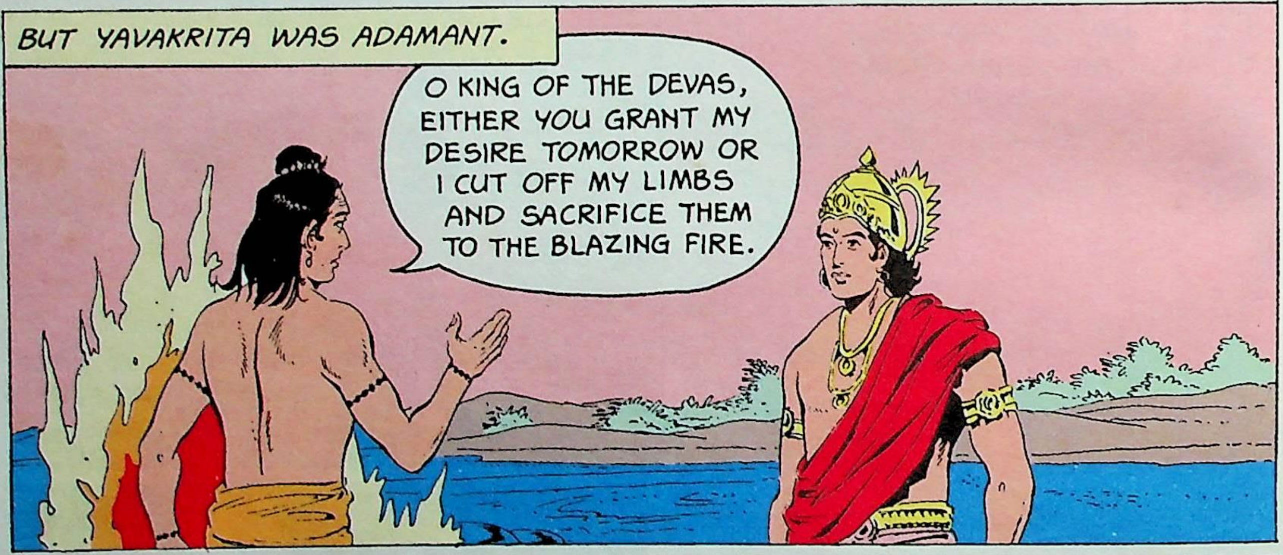

I SHALL PRACTISE SEVERE PENANCES AND BY PENANCE ALONE SHALL I MAKE THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE VEDAS MINE.

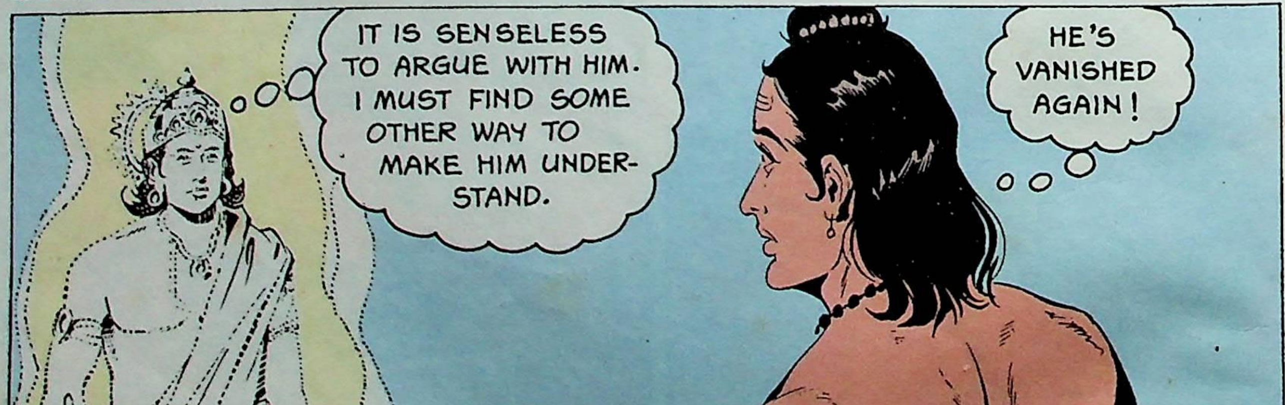

THE POWER OF MY PENANCES SHALL BE SUCH THAT THE CELESTIALS WILL BE COMPELLED TO GRANT MY DESIRE.
SO GOING TO THE BANKS OF THE GANGA, HE LIT A SACRIFICIAL FIRE.
TILL ONE OF THE CELESTIALS APPEARS BEFORE ME TO GRANT MY DESIRE, I SHALL EXPOSE MY BODY TO THIS FIRE.
AT AMARAVATI, INDRA WAS DISTURBED BY YAVAKRITA'S PENANCES.
I MUST FIND OUT WHY HE IS TORTURING HIMSELF SO!
SO HE APPEARED BEFORE YAVAKRITA.
WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN BY SUCH SEVERE AUSTERITIES?
LORD, I WANT KNOWLEDGE OF THE VEDAS DEEPER THAN THAT OF ANYONE ELSE.

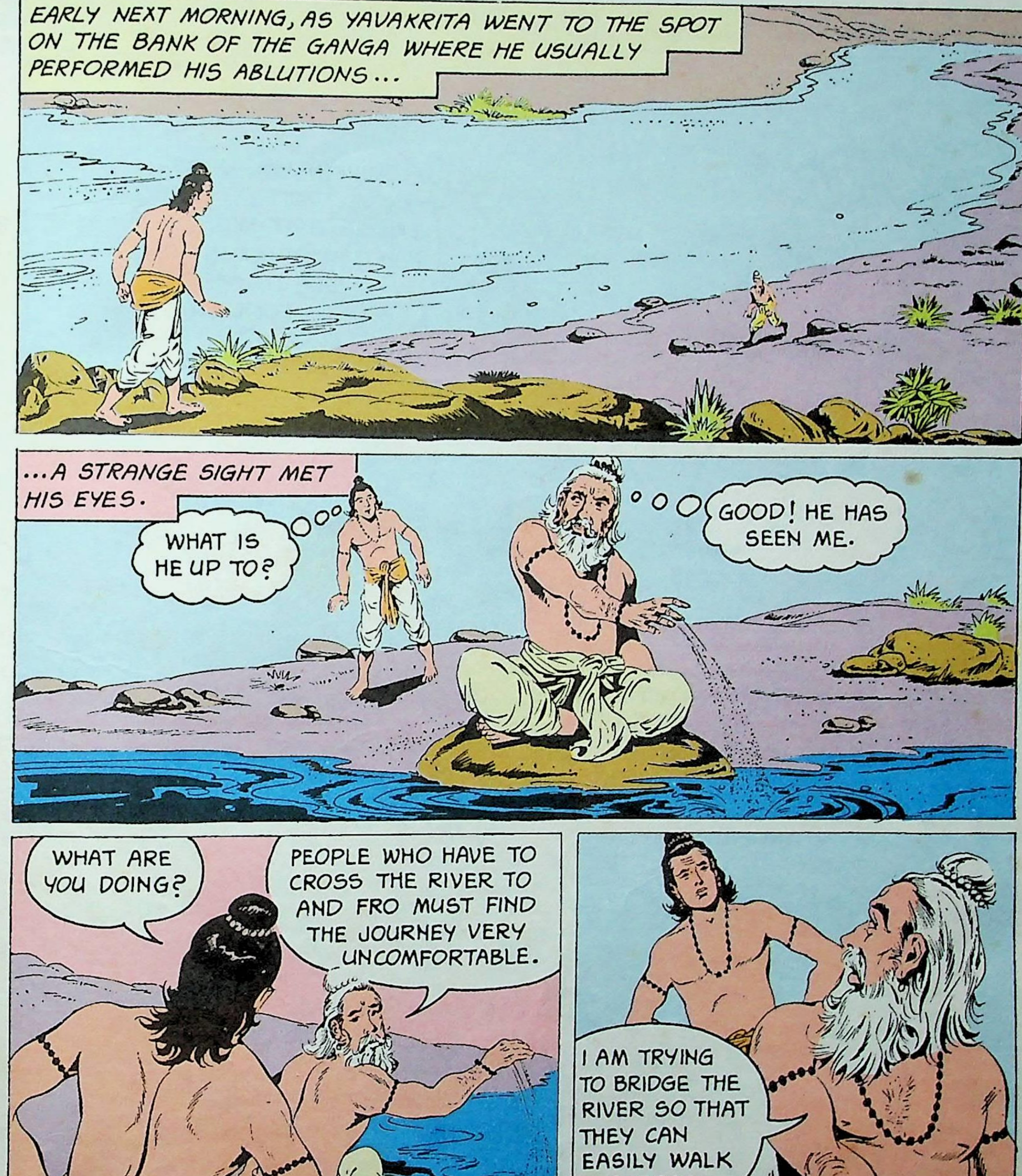

THEN WHY DON'T YOU SEEK A GURU?
A GURU WOULD TAKE SEVERAL YEARS TO IMPART SUCH KNOWLEDGE TO ME. I CAN ACQUIRE IT FASTER BY THE STRENGTH OF MY PENANCE.
THE WAY OF PENANCE IS NOT THE PROPER WAY. GO AND LEARN THE VEDAS FROM A GURU.
AND TO YAVAKRITA'S DISMAY, INDRA VANISHED.
BUT HE WAS NOT GOING TO GIVE UP.
I WILL CONTINUE WITH MY PENANCE AND WILL MAKE HIM APPEAR BEFORE ME AGAIN.

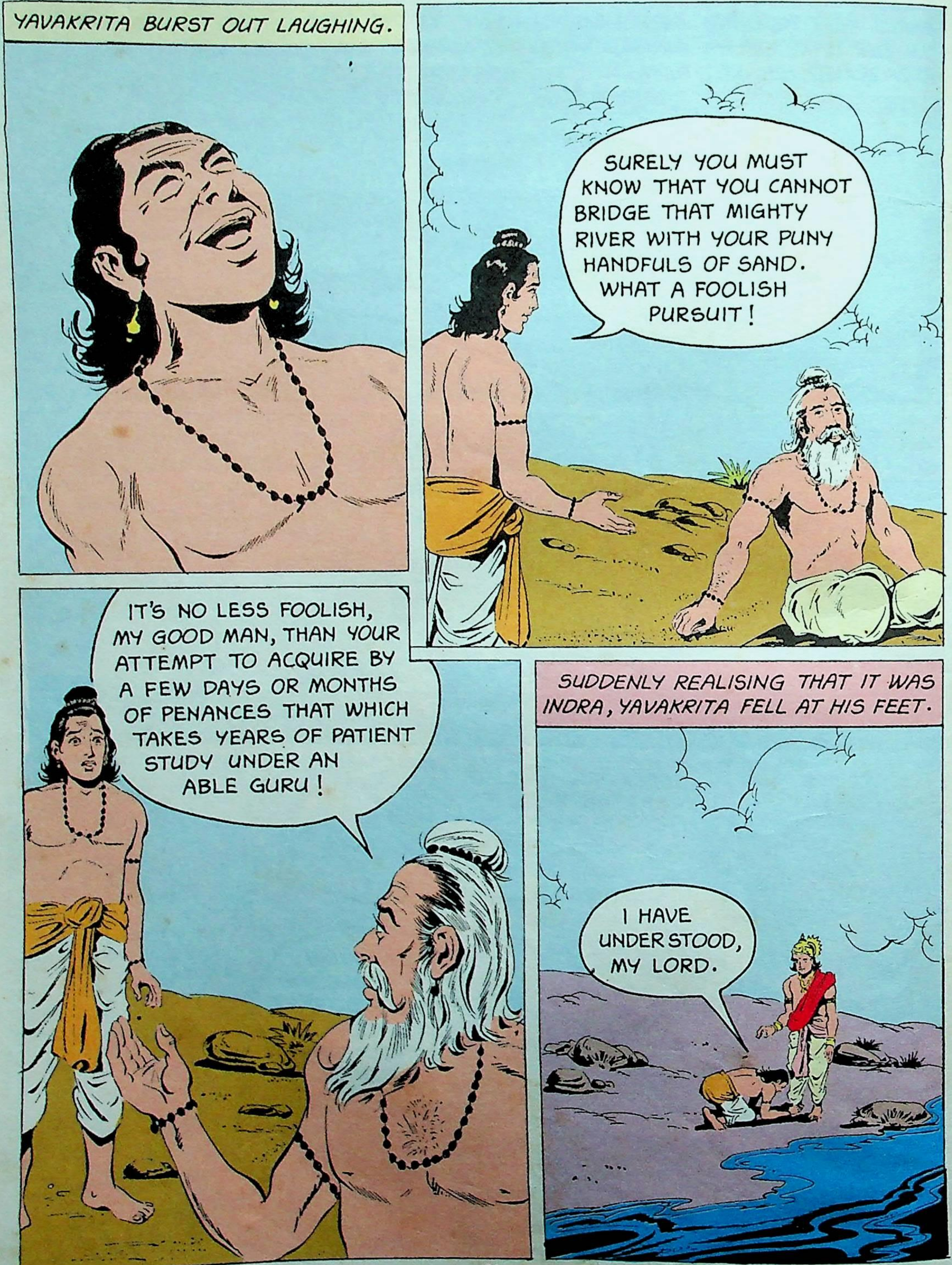

AT AMARAVATI —
IF I DON'T STOP HIM, HE WILL DESTROY HIMSELF.


SO INDRA APPEARED ONCE MORE BEFORE YAVAKRITA.
YOUR METHOD IS BOUND TO FAIL. KNOWLEDGE HAS TO BE ACQUIRED BY YEARS OF PATIENT STUDY UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF A GURU.


BUT YAVAKRITA WAS ADAMANT.
O KING OF THE DEVAS, EITHER YOU GRANT MY DESIRE TOMORROW OR I CUT OFF MY LIMBS AND SACRIFICE THEM TO THE BLAZING FIRE.


IT IS SENSELESS TO ARGUE WITH HIM. I MUST FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND.
HE'S VANISHED AGAIN!


EARLY NEXT MORNING, AS YAVAKRITA WENT TO THE SPOT ON THE BANK OF THE GANGA WHERE HE USUALLY PERFORMED HIS ABLUTIONS...
...A STRANGE SIGHT MET HIS EYES.
WHAT IS HE UP TO?
GOOD! HE HAS SEEN ME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PEOPLE WHO HAVE TO CROSS THE RIVER TO AND FRO MUST FIND THE JOURNEY VERY UNCOMFORTABLE.
I AM TRYING TO BRIDGE THE RIVER SO THAT THEY CAN EASILY WALK ACROSS.


YAVAKRITA BURST OUT LAUGHING.
SURELY YOU MUST KNOW THAT YOU CANNOT BRIDGE THAT MIGHTY RIVER WITH YOUR PUNY HANDFULS OF SAND. WHAT A FOOLISH PURSUIT!
IT'S NO LESS FOOLISH, MY GOOD MAN, THAN YOUR ATTEMPT TO ACQUIRE BY A FEW DAYS OR MONTHS OF PENANCES THAT WHICH TAKES YEARS OF PATIENT STUDY UNDER AN ABLE GURU!
SUDDENLY REALISING THAT IT WAS INDRA, YAVAKRITA FELL AT HIS FEET.
I HAVE UNDERSTOOD, MY LORD.

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

PARASHURAMA

SIXTH INCARNATION OF VISHNU

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AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

The route to your roots

PARASHURAMA

It was a time when the earth was ravaged with violence and bloodshed. The Kshatriya kings had forgotten their duty to rule with compassion. Instead, they subdued the people by unleashing a reign of brutal terror. At such a time the sixth incarnation of Vishnu was born. Parashurama, axe-wielding warrior-saint, strode across the ages to destroy evil and liberate good.

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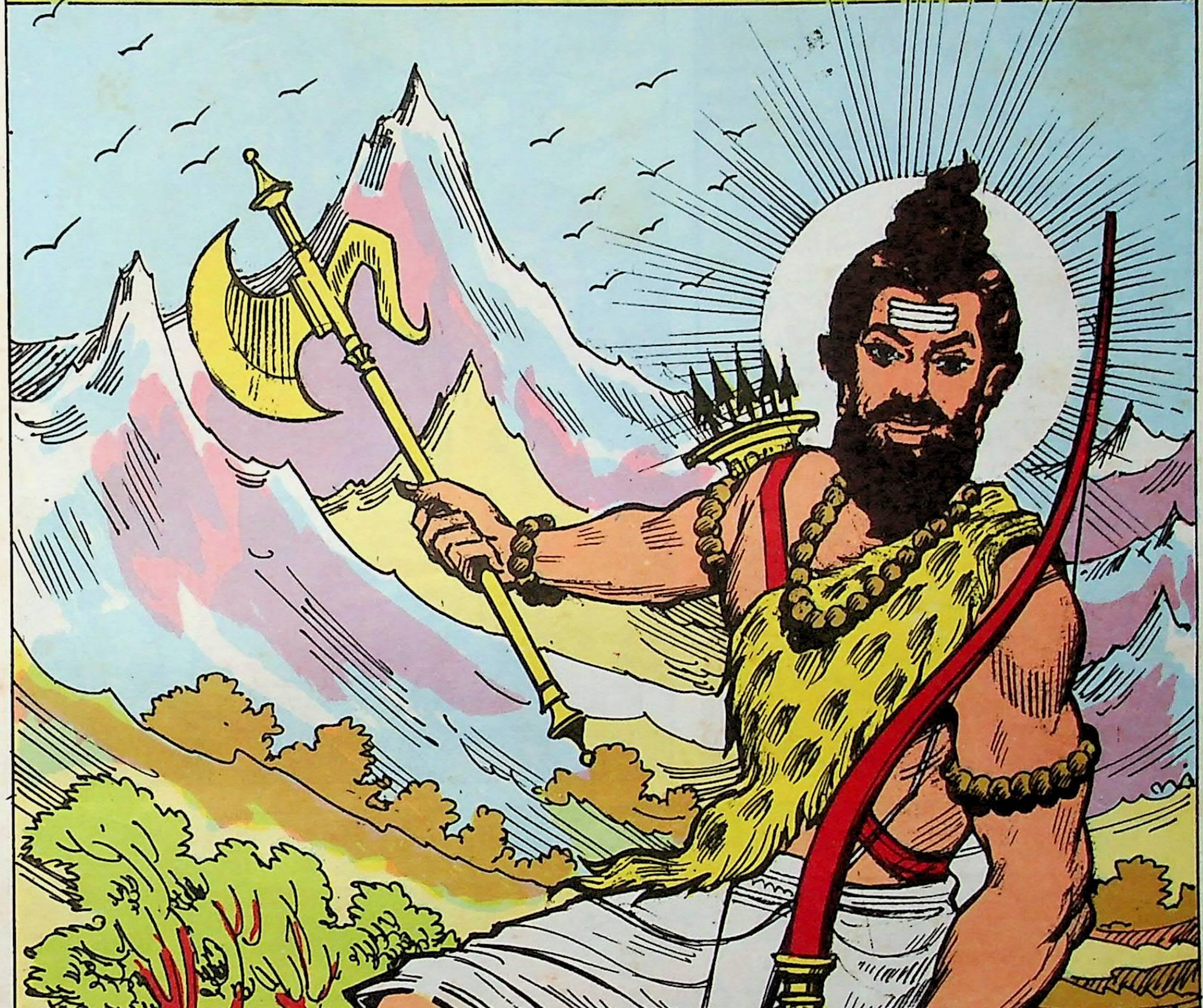
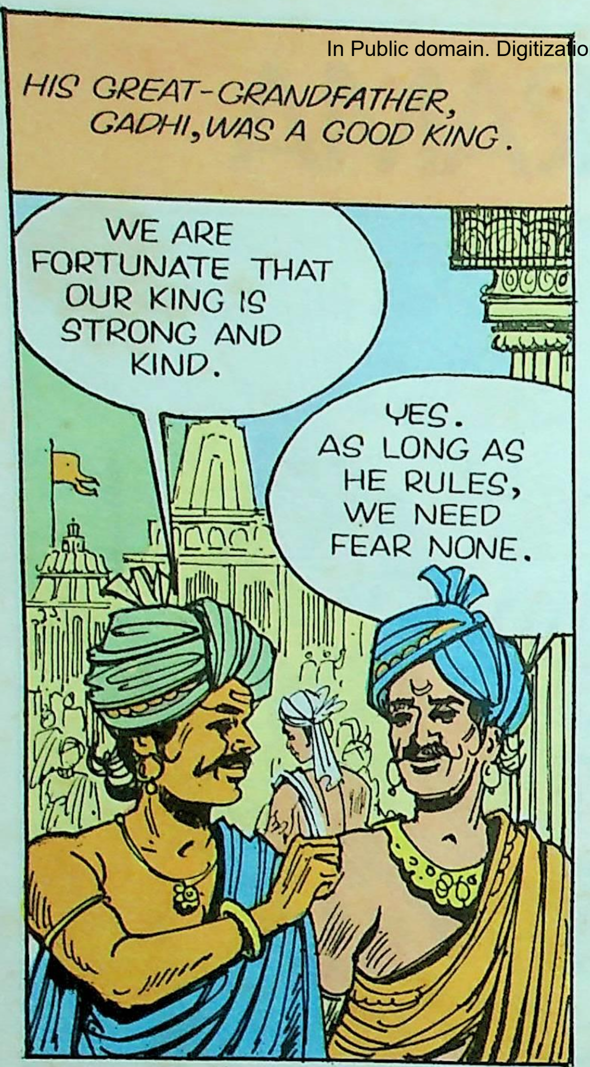
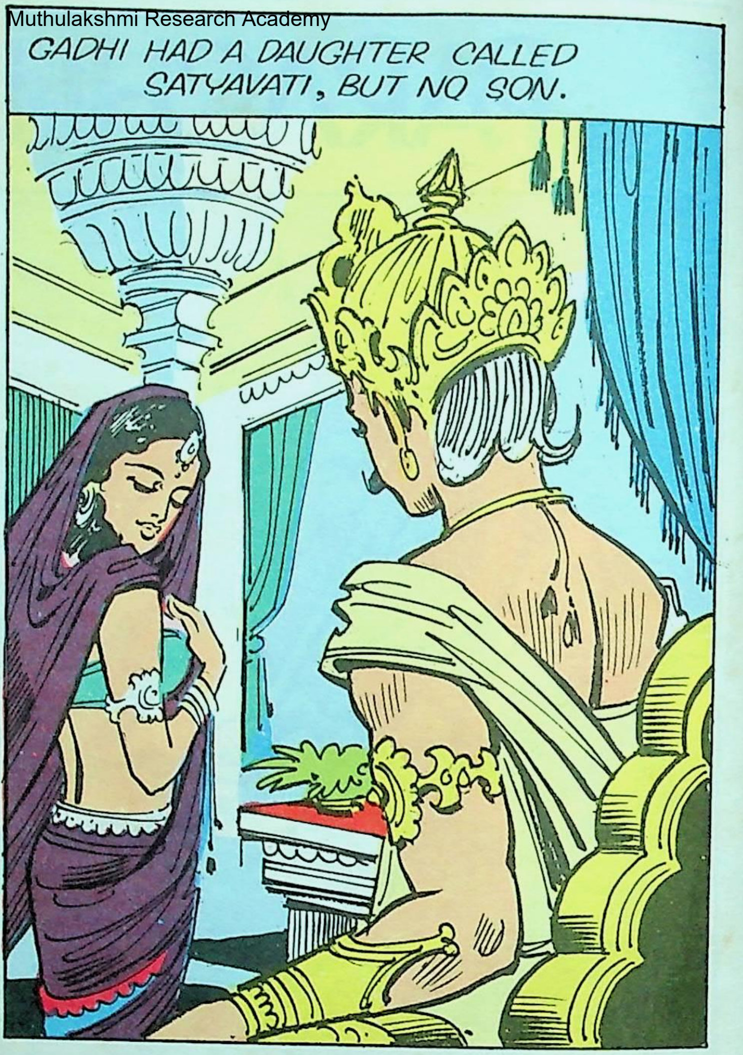
Editor
Anant Pai

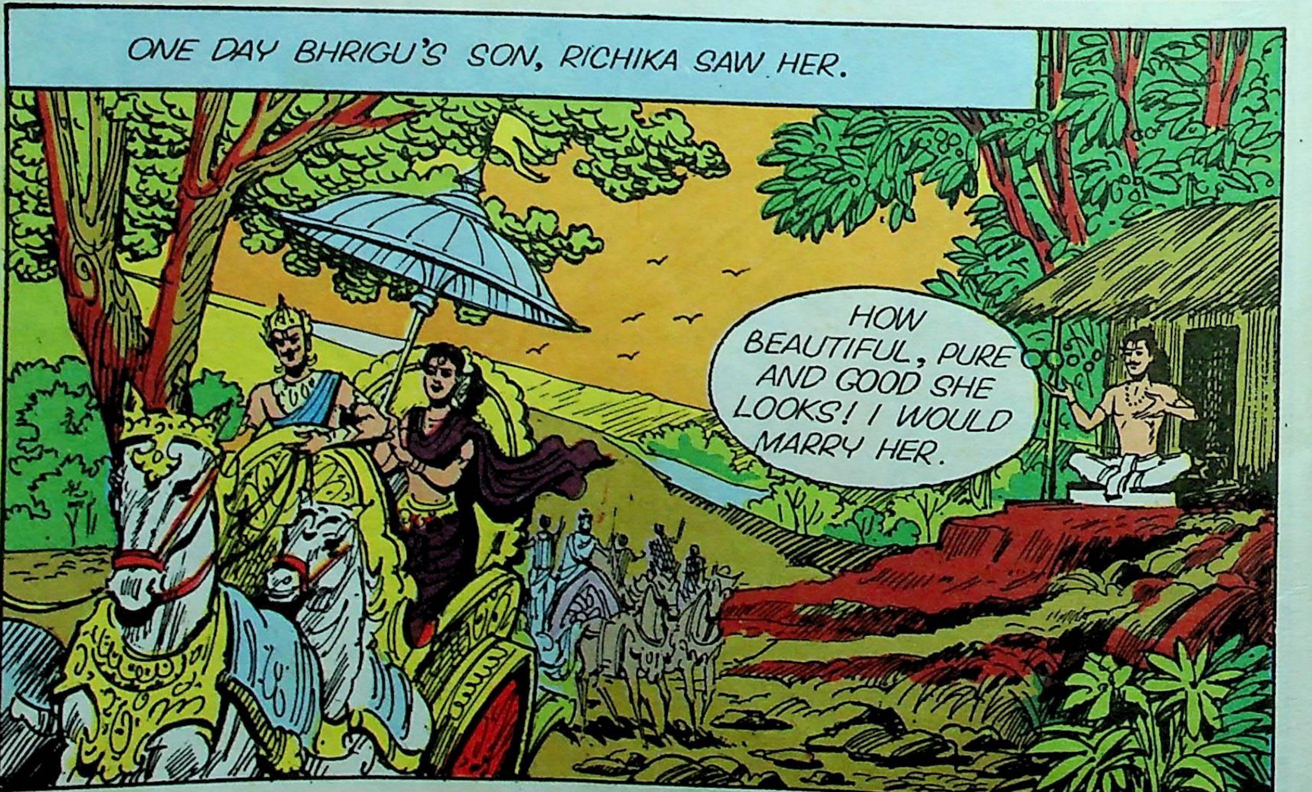
PARASHURAMA

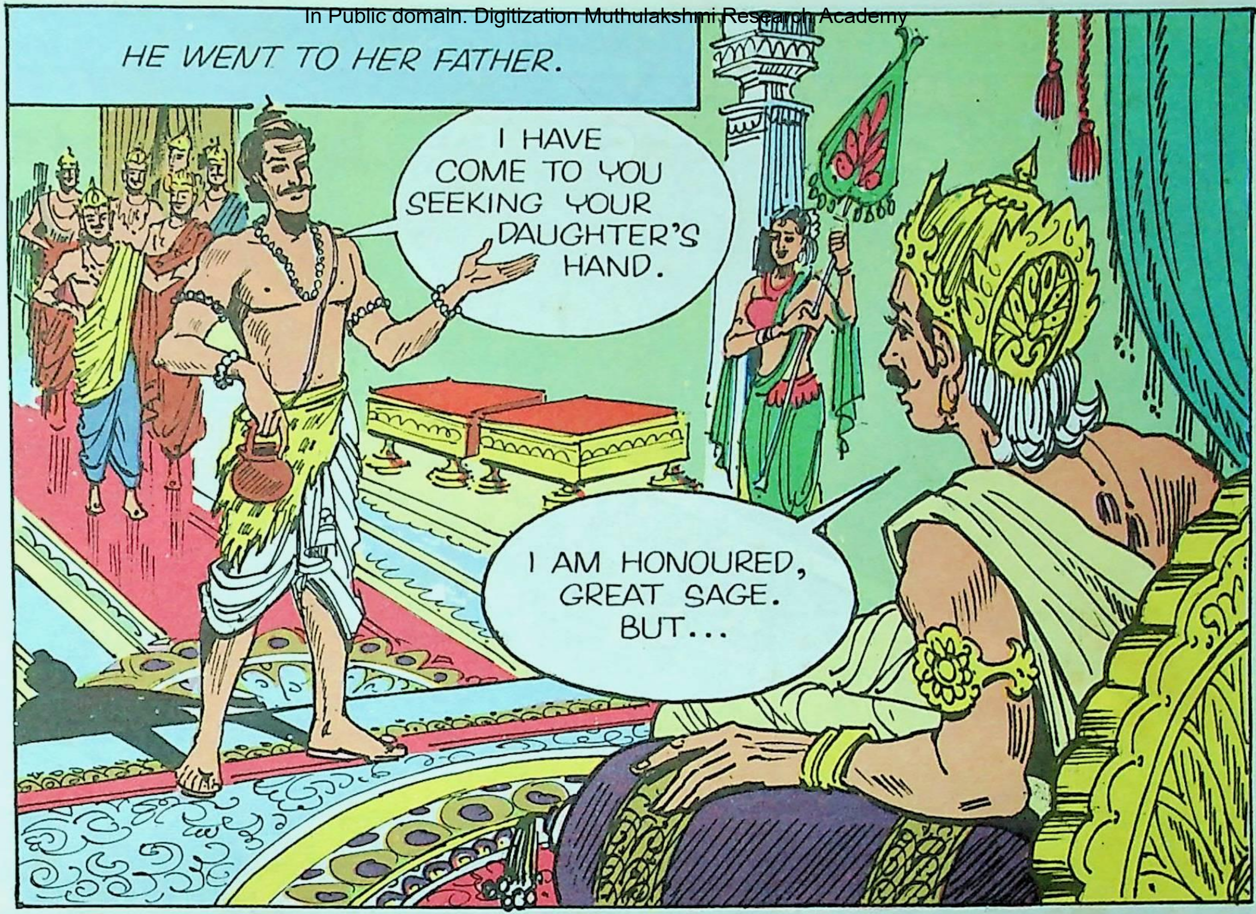


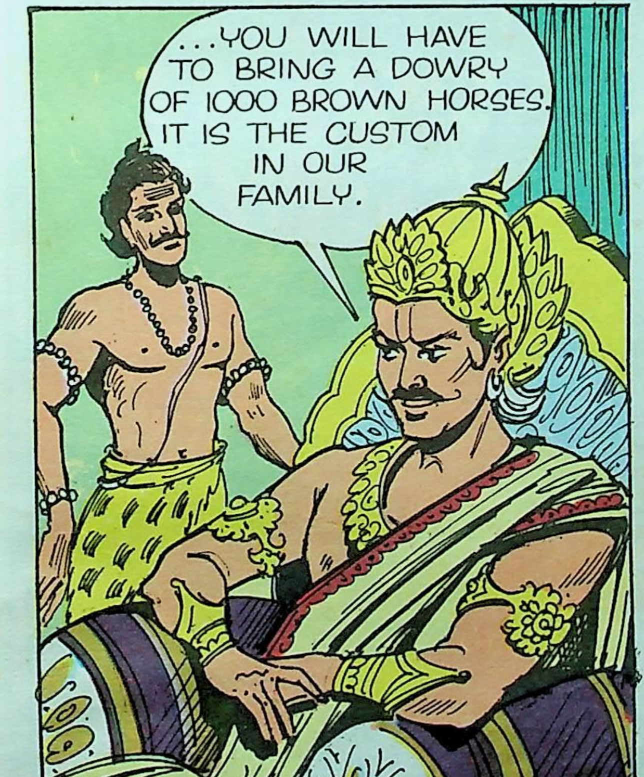
PARASHURAMA WAS BORN THE SON OF RISHI JAMADAGNI AND RENUKA. BUT IT WAS A BIRTH UNDER STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES.

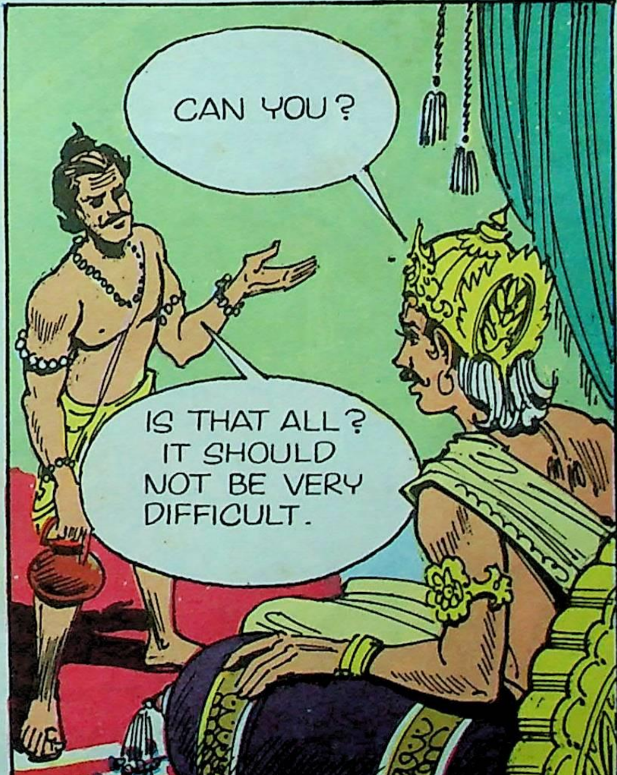

HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER, GADHI, WAS A GOOD KING.
WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT OUR KING IS STRONG AND KIND.
YES. AS LONG AS HE RULES, WE NEED FEAR NONE.

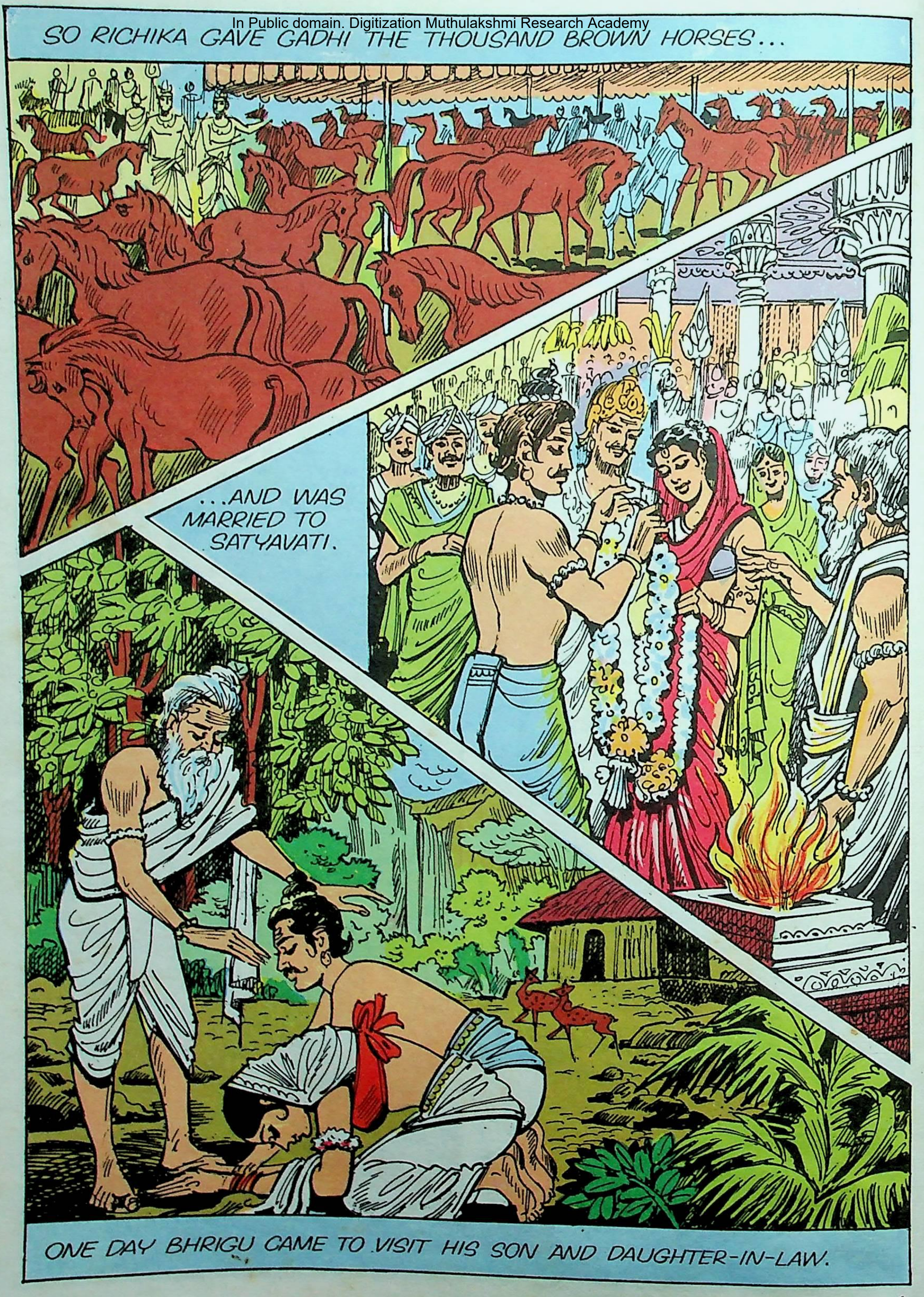

GADHI HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED SATYAVATI, BUT NO SON.

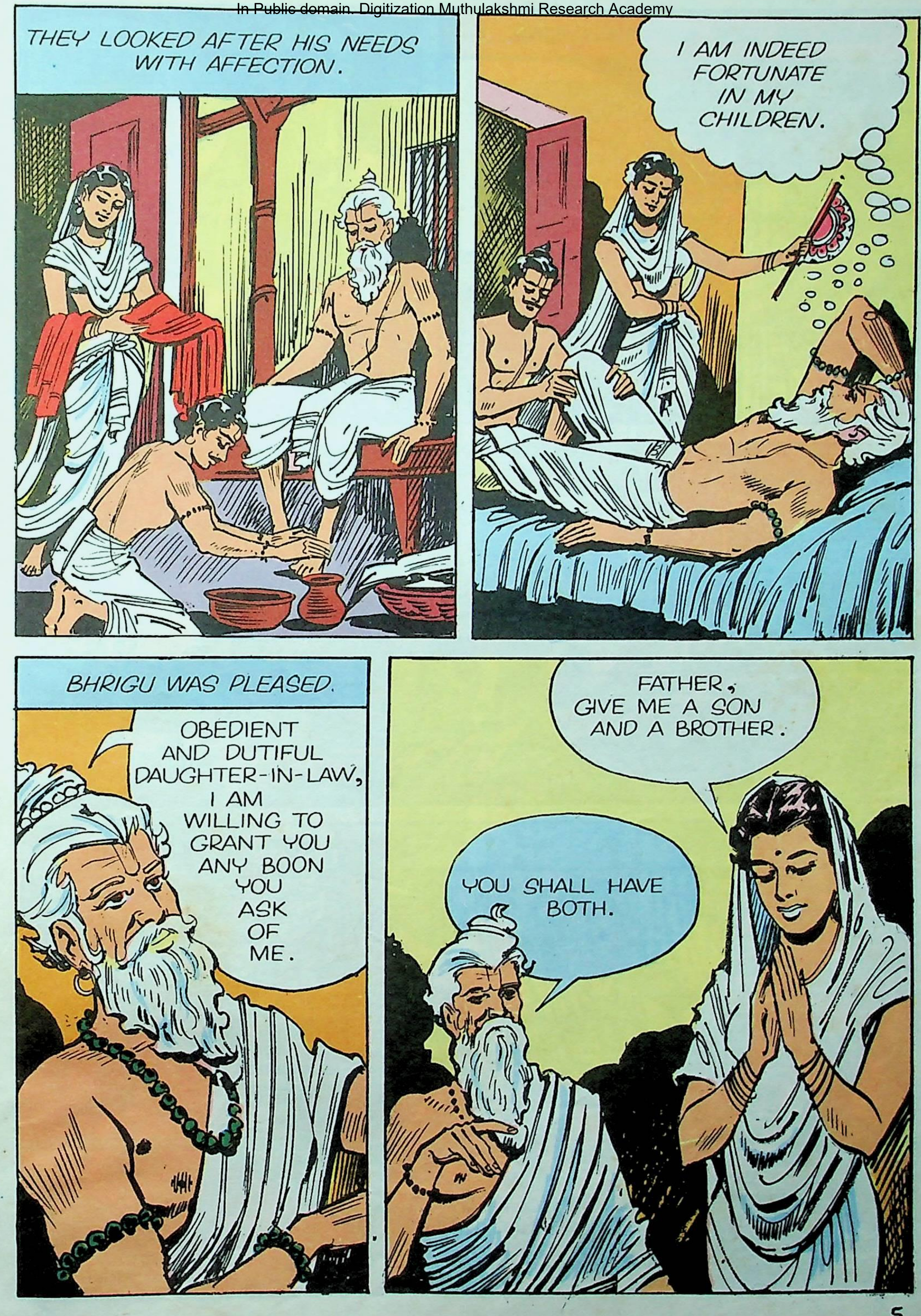

ONE DAY BHRIGU'S SON, RICHIKA SAW HER.
HOW BEAUTIFUL, PURE AND GOOD SHE LOOKS! I WOULD MARRY HER.

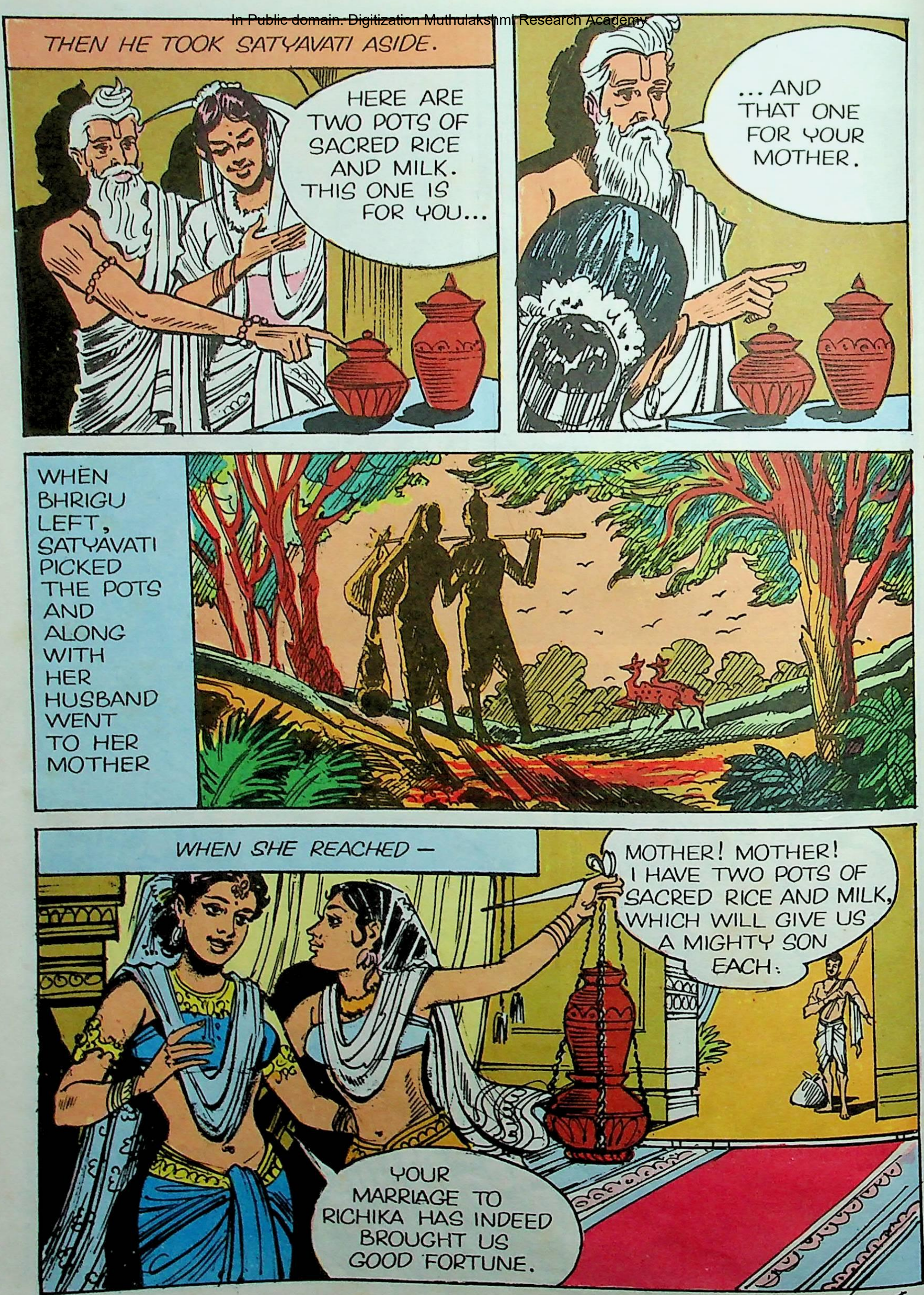

HE WENT TO HER FATHER.
I HAVE COME TO YOU SEEKING YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND.
I AM HONOURED, GREAT SAGE. BUT...

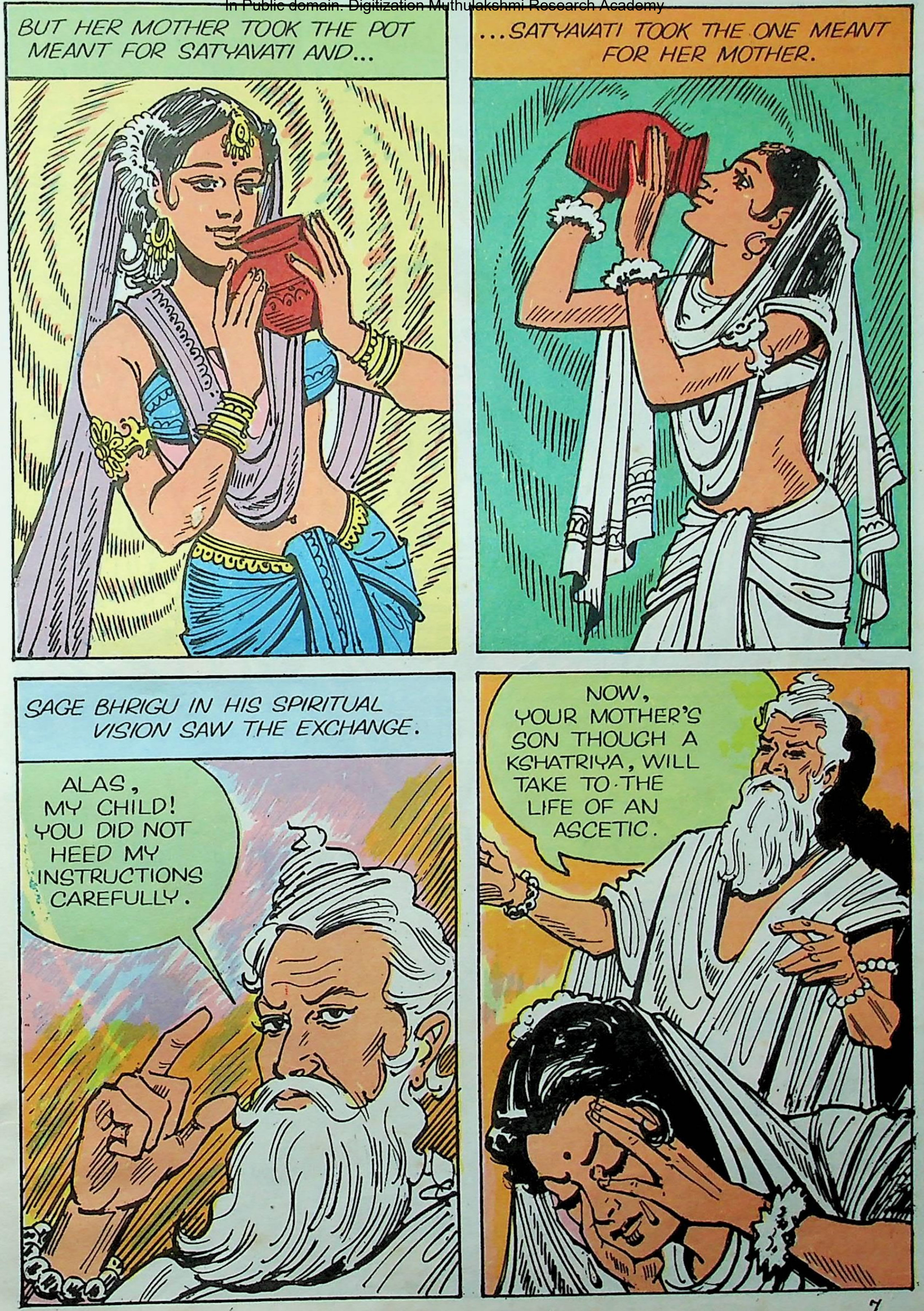

...YOU WILL HAVE TO BRING A DOWRY OF 1000 BROWN HORSES. IT IS THE CUSTOM IN OUR FAMILY.

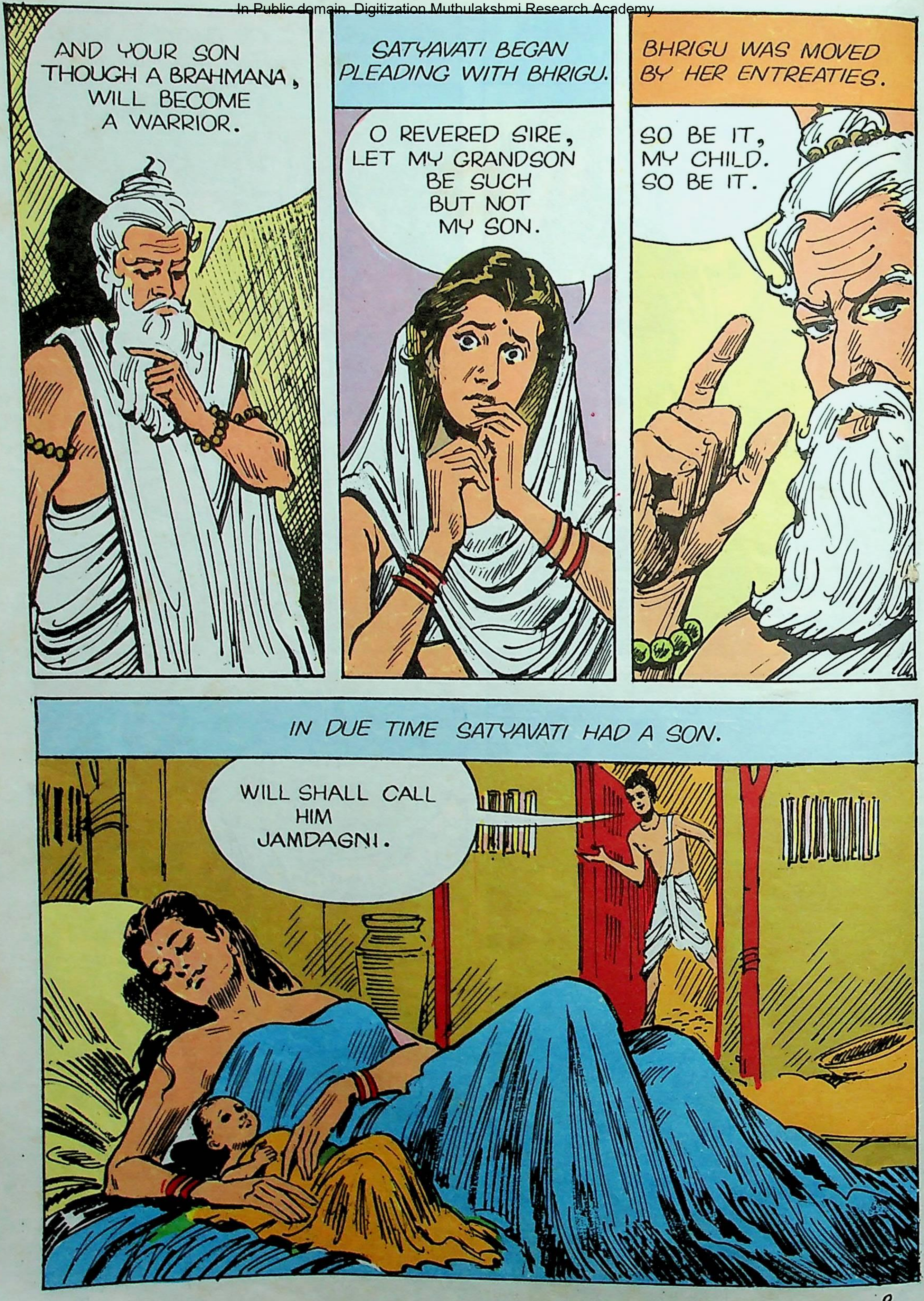

CAN YOU?
IS THAT ALL? IT SHOULD NOT BE VERY DIFFICULT.


SO RICHIKA GAVE GADHI THE THOUSAND BROWN HORSES...
...AND WAS MARRIED TO SATYAVATI.
ONE DAY BHRIGU CAME TO VISIT HIS SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

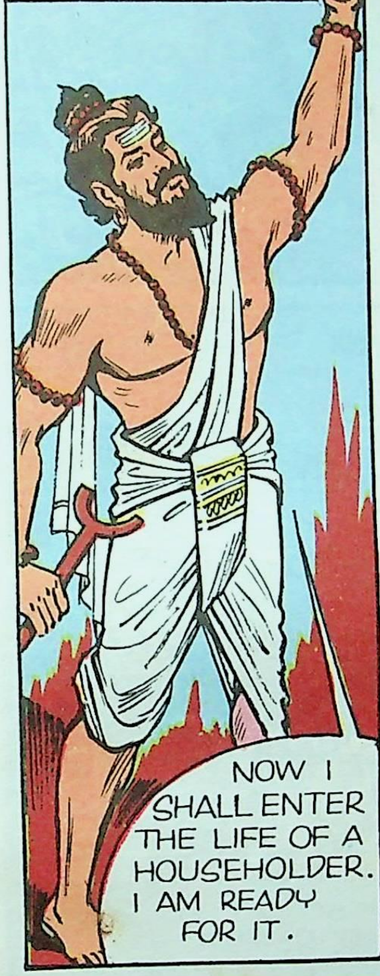

THEY LOOKED AFTER HIS NEEDS WITH AFFECTION.
I AM INDEED FORTUNATE IN MY CHILDREN.
BHRIGU WAS PLEASED.
OBEDIENT AND DUTIFUL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, I AM WILLING TO GRANT YOU ANY BOON YOU ASK OF ME.
FATHER, GIVE ME A SON AND A BROTHER.
YOU SHALL HAVE BOTH.


THEN HE TOOK SATYAVATI ASIDE.
HERE ARE TWO POTS OF SACRED RICE AND MILK. THIS ONE IS FOR YOU...
... AND THAT ONE FOR YOUR MOTHER.
WHEN BHRIGU LEFT, SATYAVATI PICKED THE POTS AND ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND WENT TO HER MOTHER
WHEN SHE REACHED –
MOTHER! MOTHER! I HAVE TWO POTS OF SACRED RICE AND MILK, WHICH WILL GIVE US A MIGHTY SON EACH.
YOUR MARRIAGE TO RICHIKA HAS INDEED BROUGHT US GOOD FORTUNE.

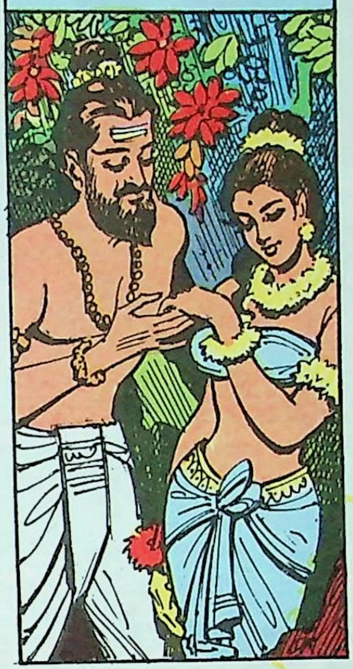

BUT HER MOTHER TOOK THE POT MEANT FOR SATYAVATI AND...
...SATYAVATI TOOK THE ONE MEANT FOR HER MOTHER.
SAGE BHRIGU IN HIS SPIRITUAL VISION SAW THE EXCHANGE.
ALAS, MY CHILD! YOU DID NOT HEED MY INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.
NOW, YOUR MOTHER'S SON THOUGH A KSHATRIYA, WILL TAKE TO THE LIFE OF AN ASCETIC.


AND YOUR SON THOUGH A BRAHMANA, WILL BECOME A WARRIOR.
SATYAVATI BEGAN PLEADING WITH BHRIGU.
O REVERED SIRE, LET MY GRANDSON BE SUCH BUT NOT MY SON.
BHRIGU WAS MOVED BY HER ENTREATIES.
SO BE IT, MY CHILD. SO BE IT.
IN DUE TIME SATYAVATI HAD A SON.
WILL SHALL CALL HIM JAMDAGNI.

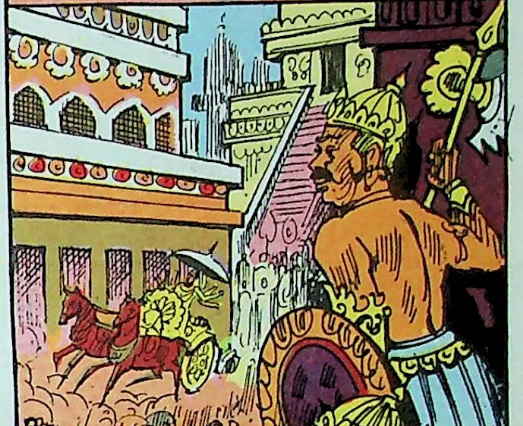
AS JAMADAGNI GREW UP, HIS DEVOTION TO THE STUDY OF THE VEDAS ALSO INCREASED AND HE SOON MASTERED THEM.

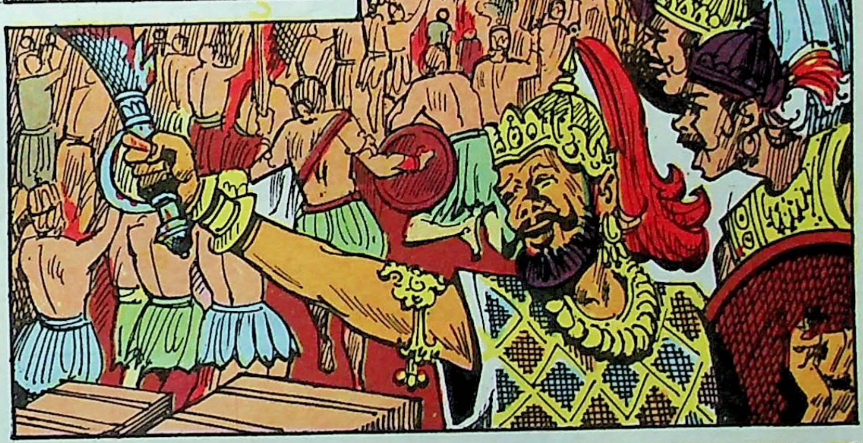

NOW I SHALL ENTER THE LIFE OF A HOUSEHOLDER. I AM READY FOR IT.

SO HE MARRIED THE CHASTE RENUKA.

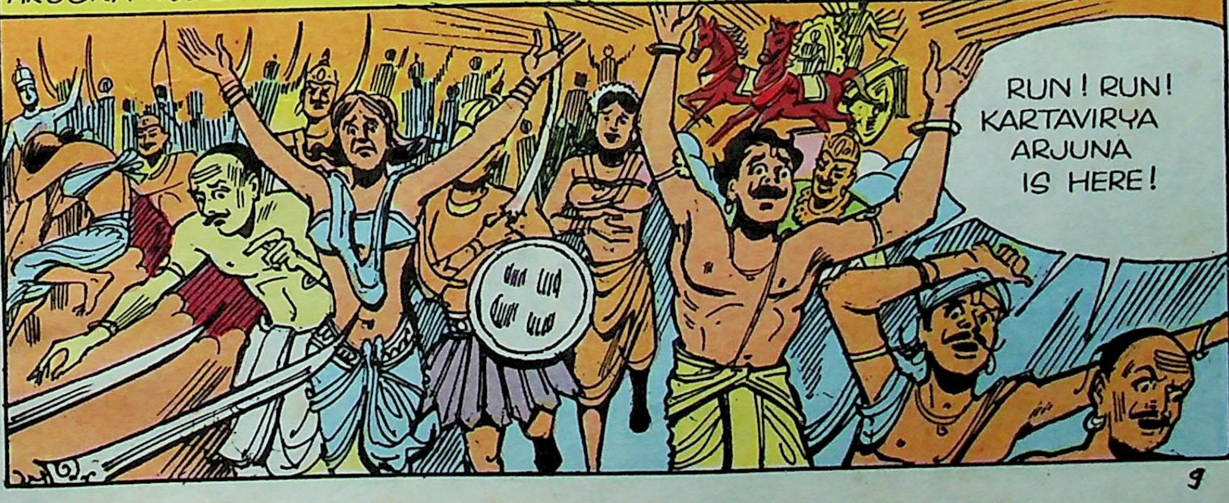


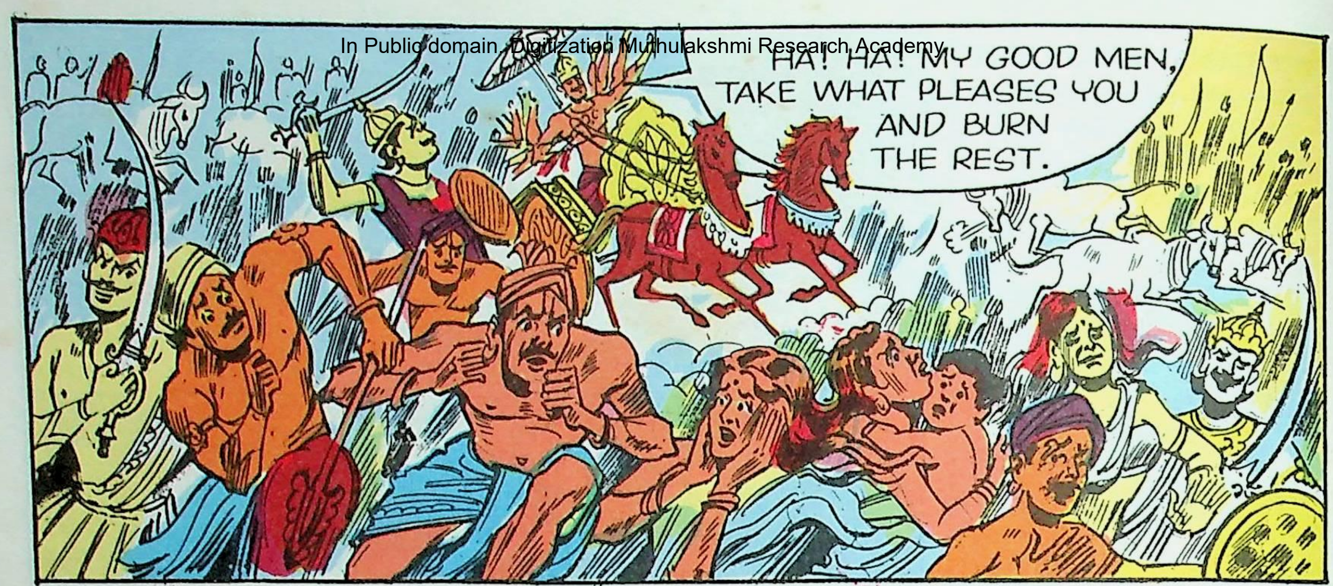
MOST OF THE KSHATRIYAS OF THOSE DAYS WERE VICIOUS. THEY WERE BECOMING A MENACE AND A BURDEN TO MOTHER EARTH. THE WORST OF THEM WAS KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA, THE 1000-ARMED KING OF THE HAIHAYA TRIBE.

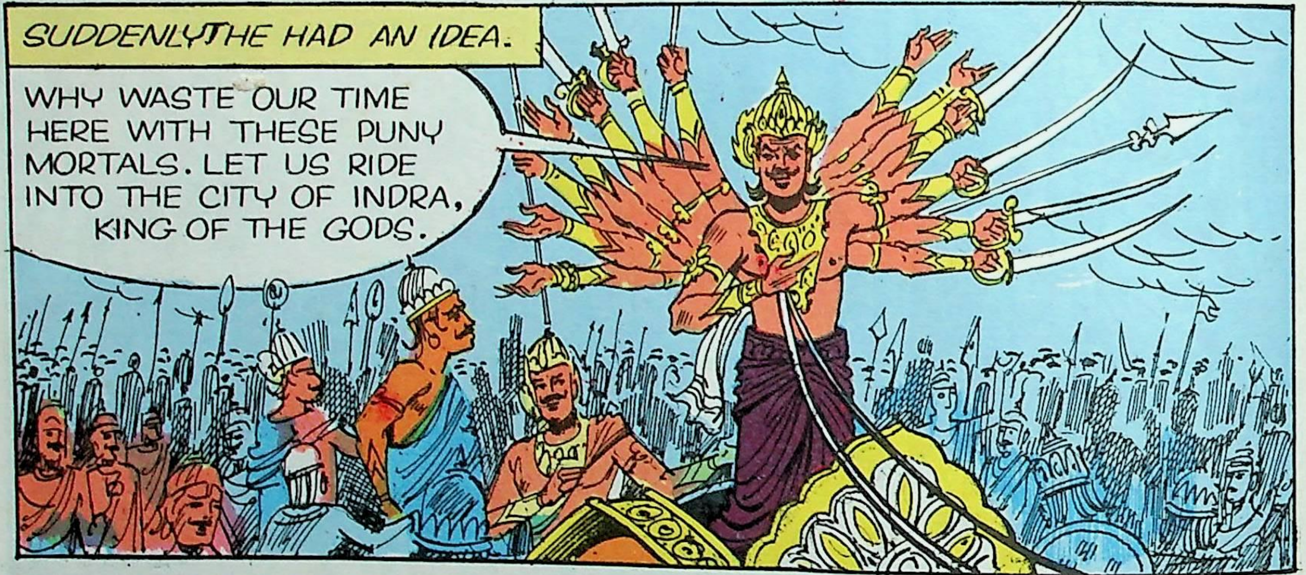


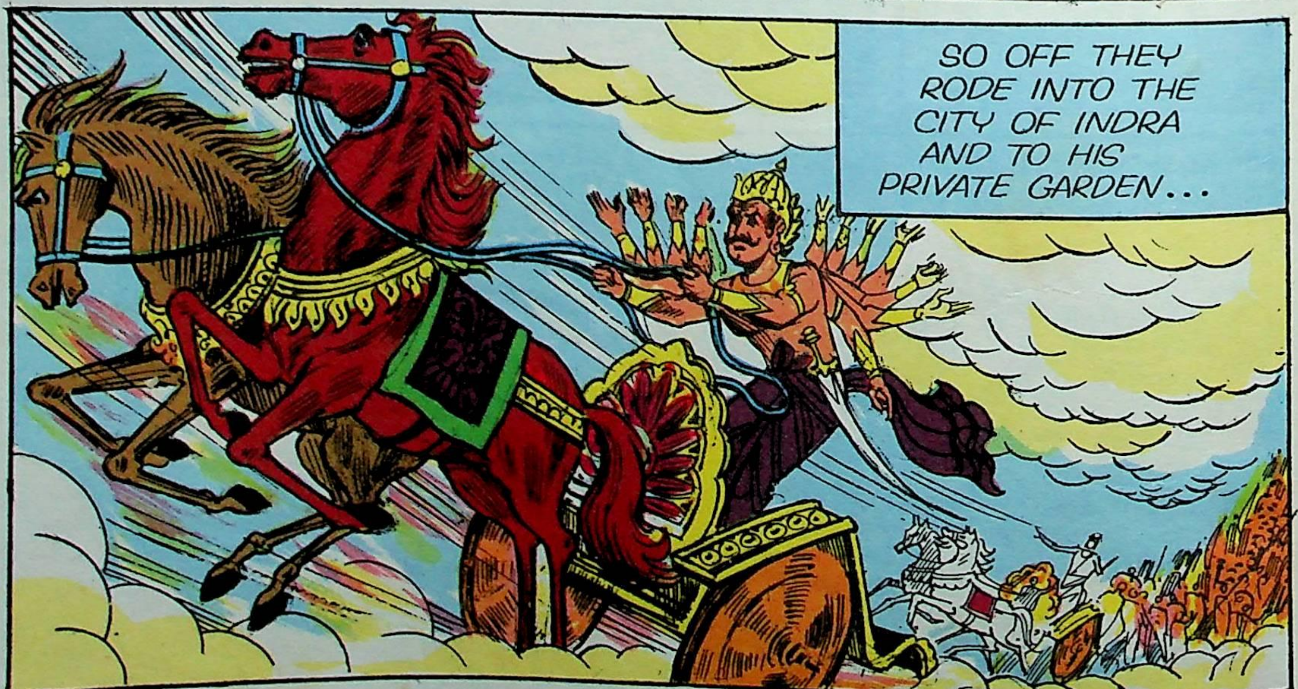


MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN TREMBLED WITH FEAR WHENEVER KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA RODE INTO A CITY IN HIS INVINCIBLE GOLDEN CHARIOT.

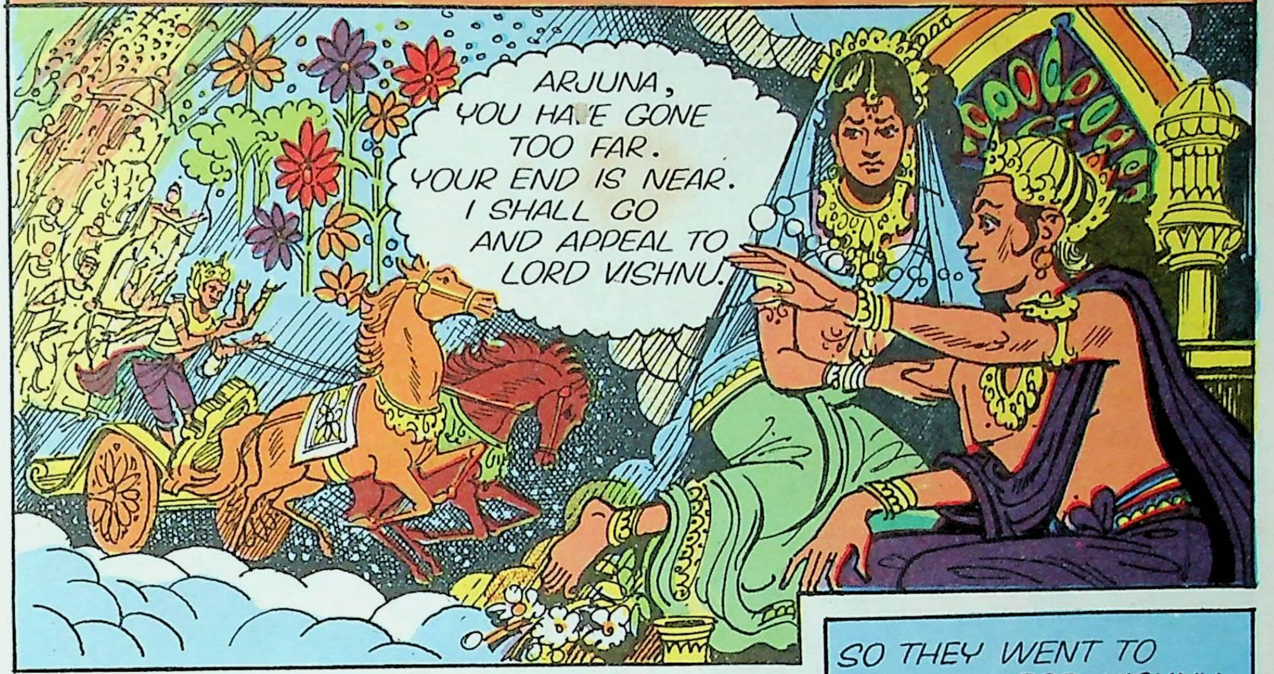

RUN! RUN! KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA IS HERE!


HA! HA! MY GOOD MEN, TAKE WHAT PLEASES YOU AND BURN THE REST.

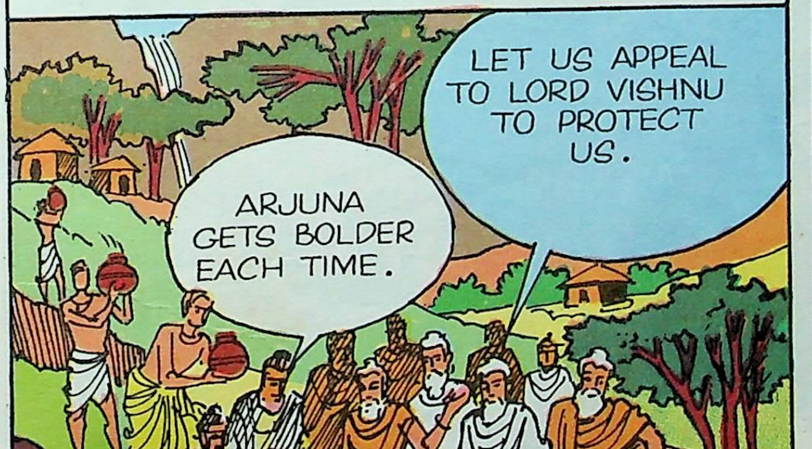

SUDDENLY HE HAD AN IDEA.
WHY WASTE OUR TIME HERE WITH THESE PUNY MORTALS. LET US RIDE INTO THE CITY OF INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.


SO OFF THEY RODE INTO THE CITY OF INDRA AND TO HIS PRIVATE GARDEN...

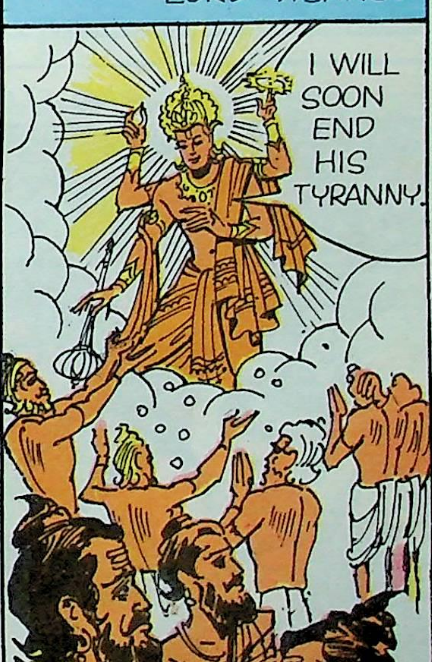
...WHERE INDRA WAS RESTING WITH HIS WIFE, SACHI.

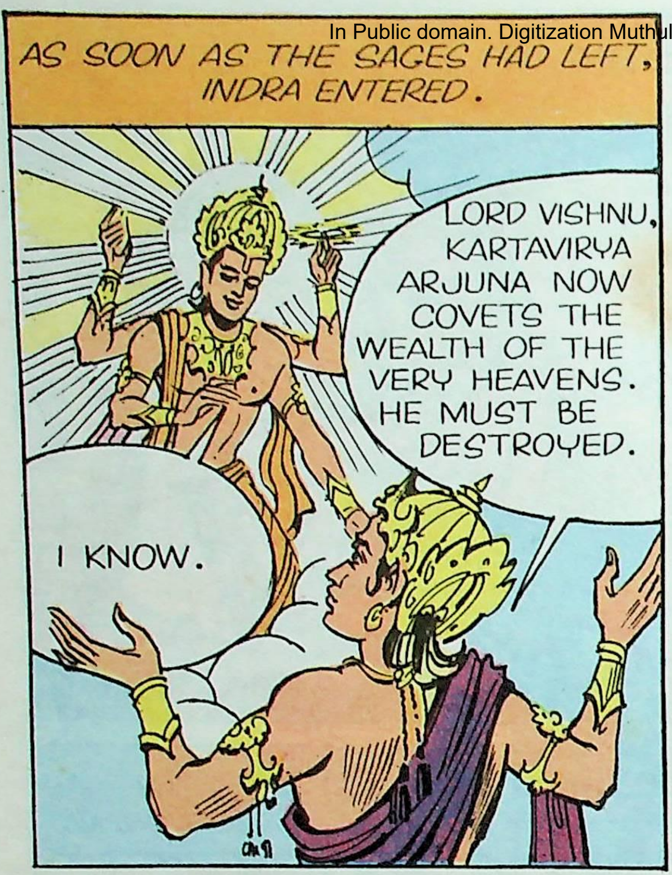

ARJUNA, YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR. YOUR END IS NEAR. I SHALL GO AND APPEAL TO LORD VISHNU.

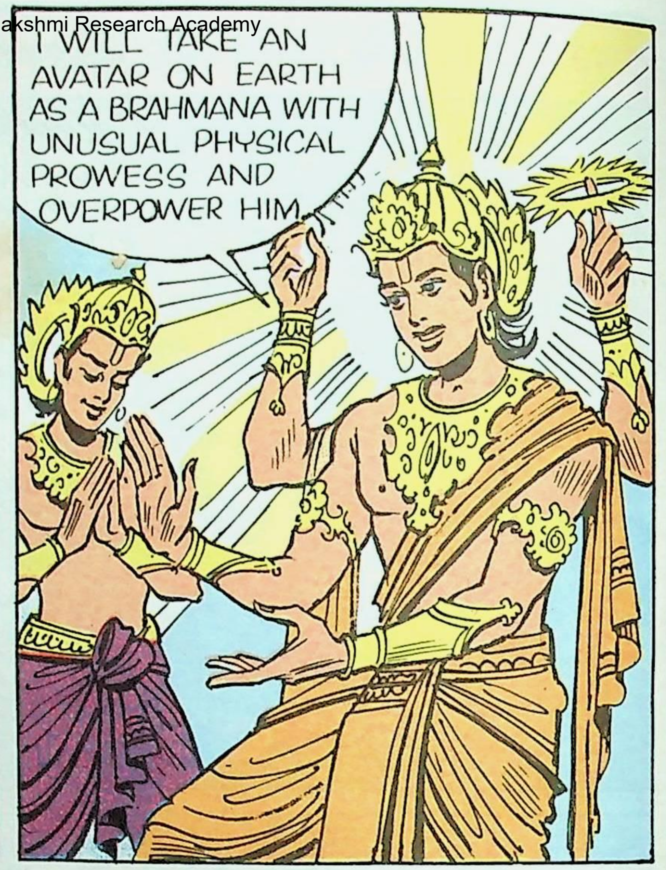
IN THE MEANWHILE, THE SAINTS AND SAGES OF THE DAY COULD NO LONGER BEAR THE VIOLATIONS OF THEIR PENANCES AND SACRIFICES BY KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA.

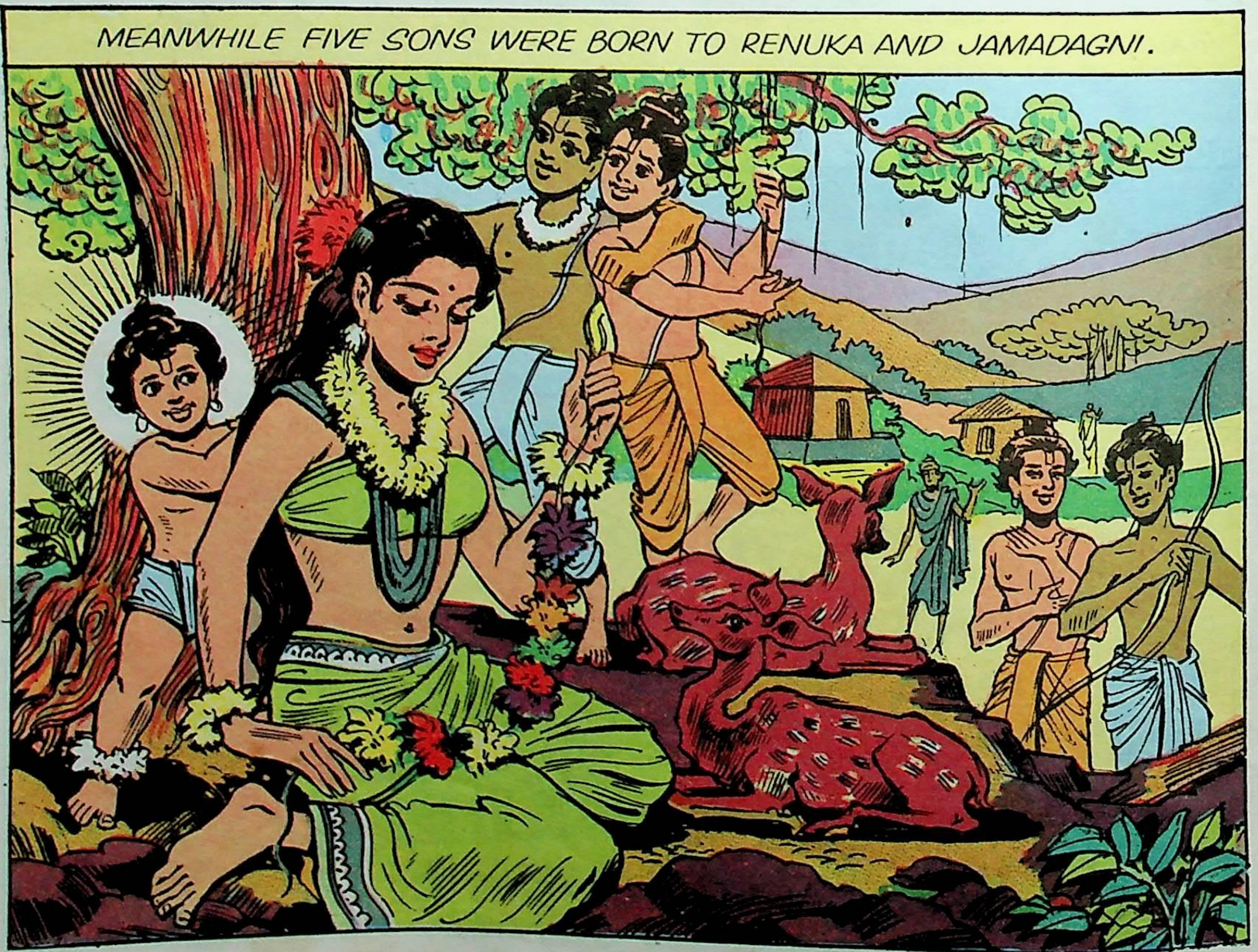

LET US APPEAL TO LORD VISHNU TO PROTECT US.
ARJUNA GETS BOLDER EACH TIME.
YES, OTHERWISE THIS EARTH WILL BE LAID WASTE.

SO THEY WENT TO LORD VISHNU.

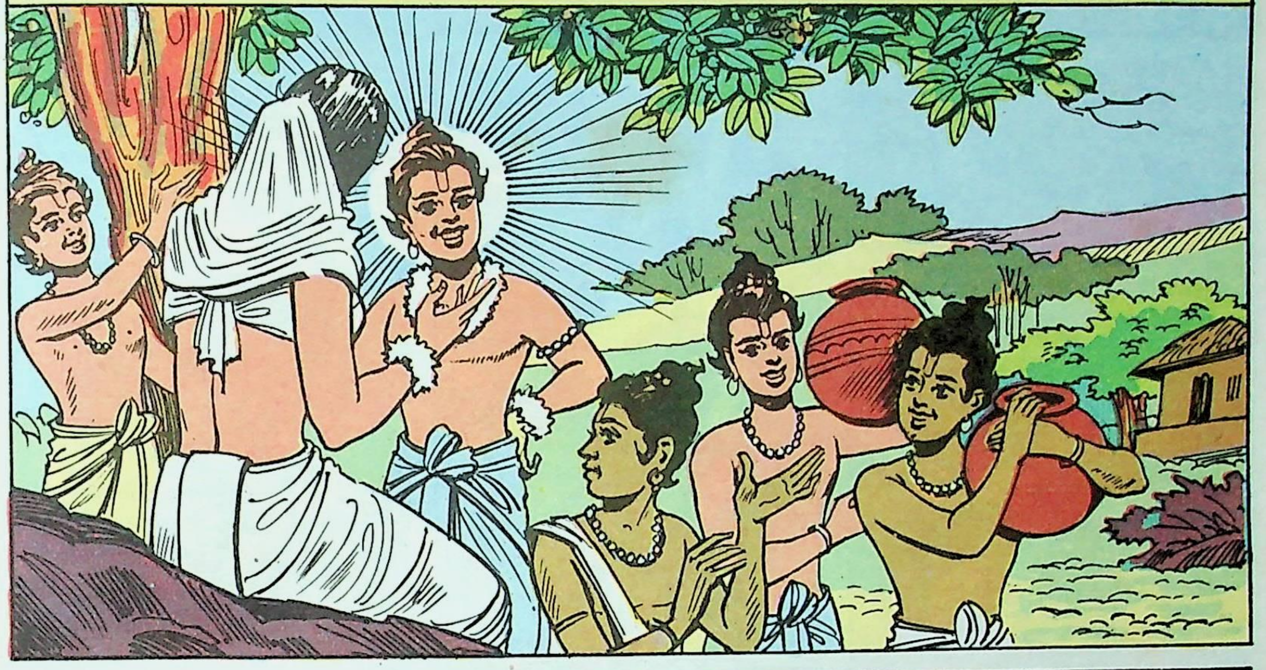

I WILL SOON END HIS TYRANNY.


AS SOON AS THE SAGES HAD LEFT, INDRA ENTERED.
LORD VISHNU, KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA NOW COVETS THE WEALTH OF THE VERY HEAVENS. HE MUST BE DESTROYED.
I KNOW.

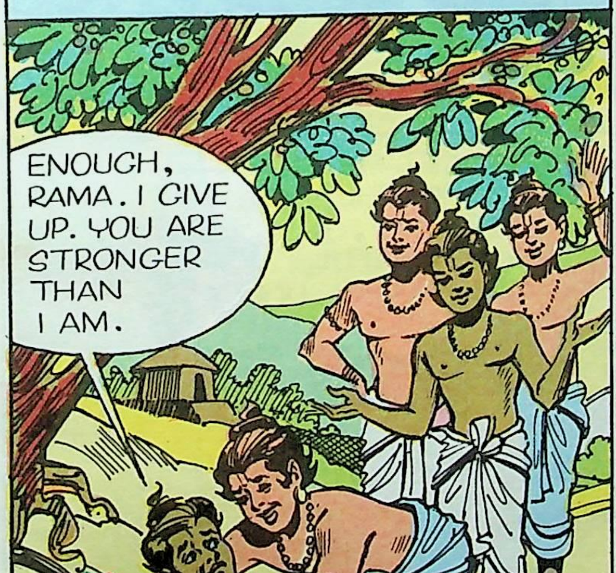

I WILL TAKE AN AVATAR ON EARTH AS A BRAHMANA WITH UNUSUAL PHYSICAL PROWESS AND OVERPOWER HIM.


MEANWHILE FIVE SONS WERE BORN TO RENUKA AND JAMADAGNI.

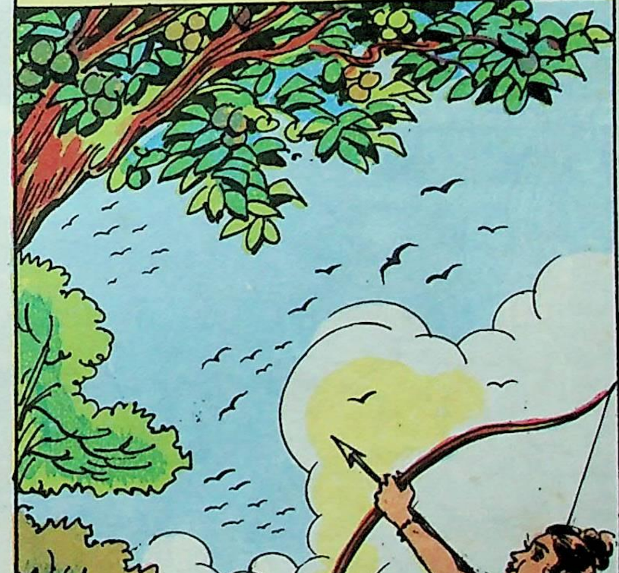
THE FIFTH AND YOUNGEST WAS RAMA WHO WAS REALLY VISHNU REBORN TO FULFIL HIS PROMISE TO INDRA AND THE SAGES.

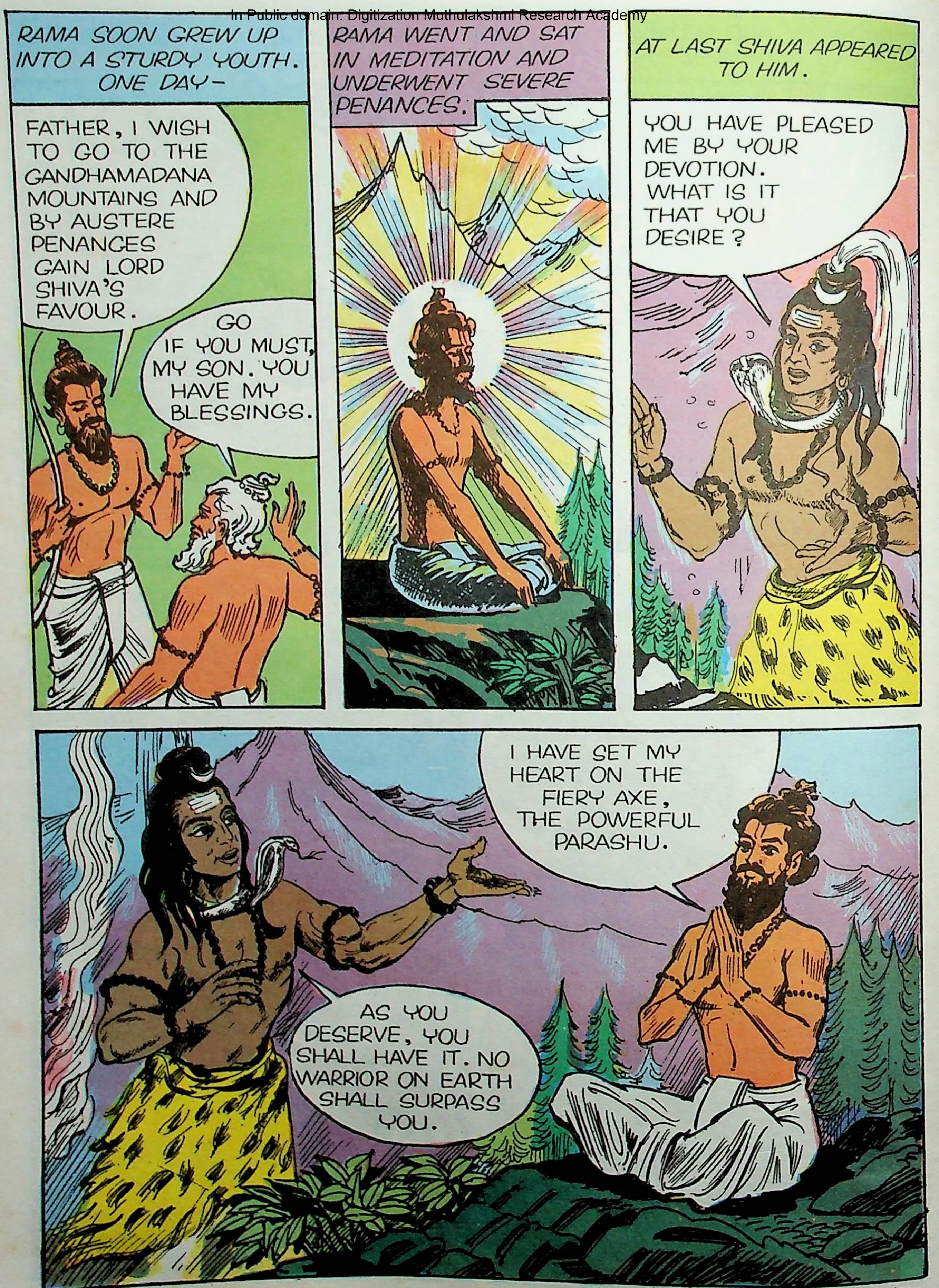


AS A CHILD RAMA WAS FOND OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND...

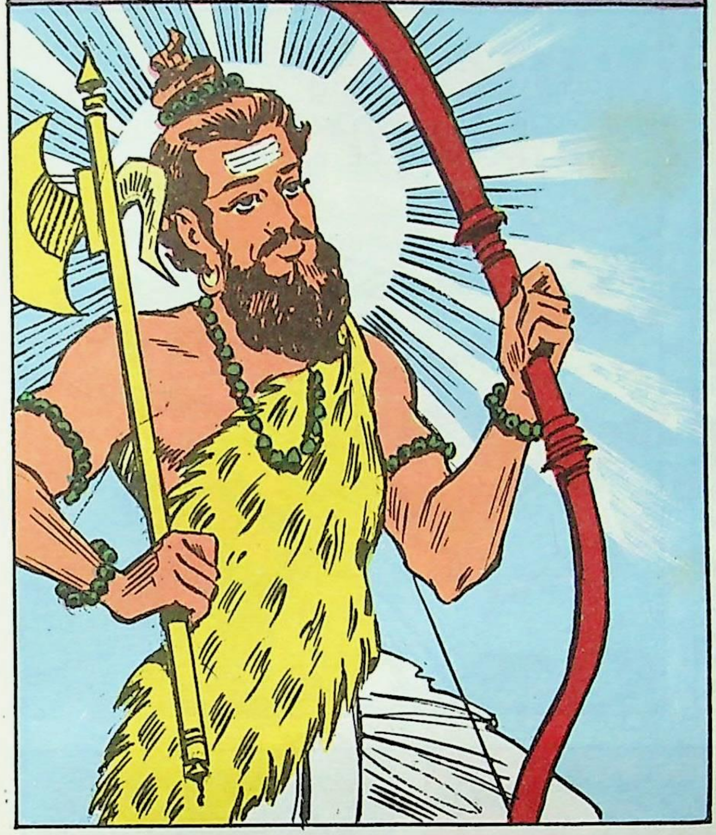

ENOUGH, RAMA. I GIVE UP. YOU ARE STRONGER THAN I AM.

...PLAYING WITH WEAPONS.



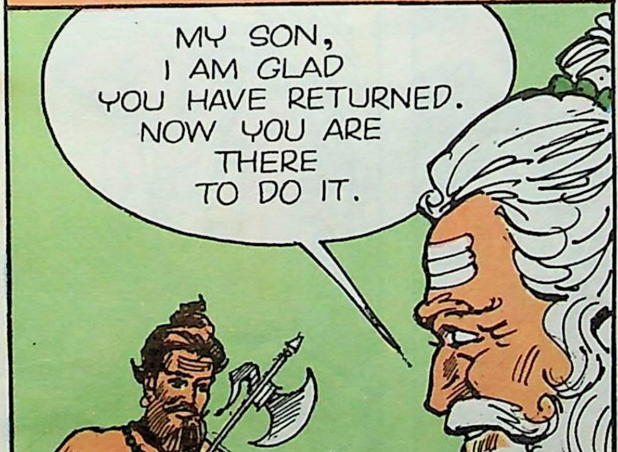

RAMA SOON GREW UP INTO A STURDY YOUTH. ONE DAY–
FATHER, I WISH TO GO TO THE GANDHAMADANA MOUNTAINS AND BY AUSTERE PENANCES GAIN LORD SHIVA'S FAVOUR.
GO IF YOU MUST, MY SON. YOU HAVE MY BLESSINGS.
RAMA WENT AND SAT IN MEDITATION AND UNDERWENT SEVERE PENANCES.
AT LAST SHIVA APPEARED TO HIM.
YOU HAVE PLEASED ME BY YOUR DEVOTION. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DESIRE?
I HAVE SET MY HEART ON THE FIERY AXE, THE POWERFUL PARASHU.
AS YOU DESERVE, YOU SHALL HAVE IT. NO WARRIOR ON EARTH SHALL SURPASS YOU.

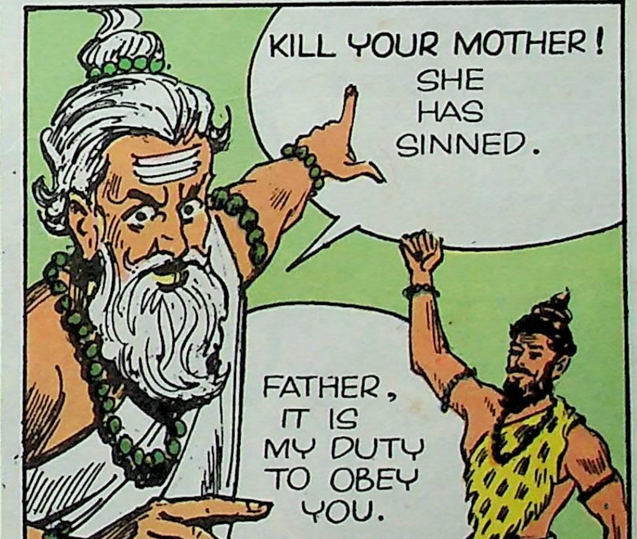
AND FROM THAT DAY RAMA CAME TO BE KNOWN AS PARASHURAMA.*

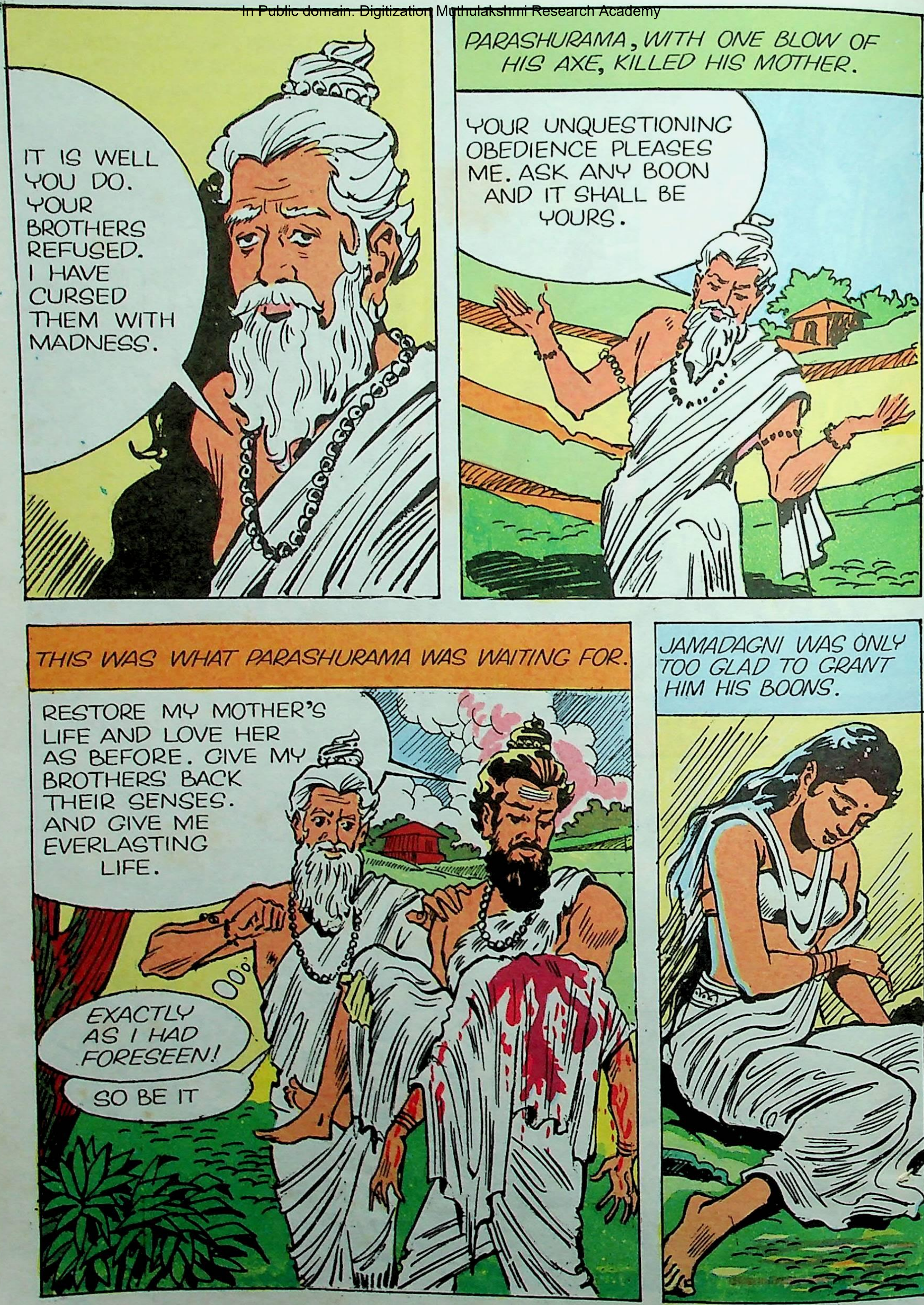


TAKING HIS AXE, PARASHURAMA RETURNED TO HIS FATHER'S ASHRAM.

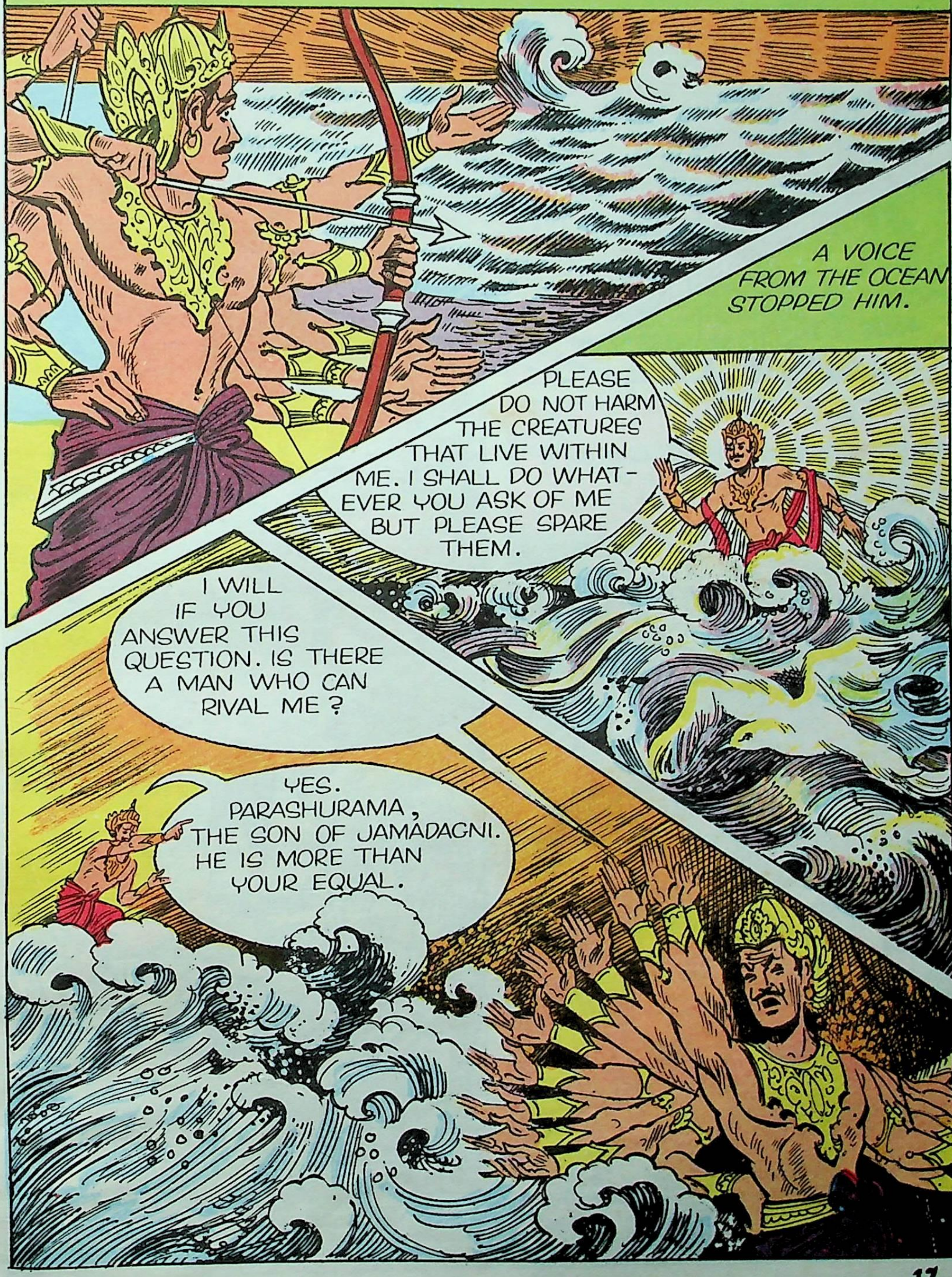
JAMADAGNI WAS OVERJOYED TO SEE HIM.

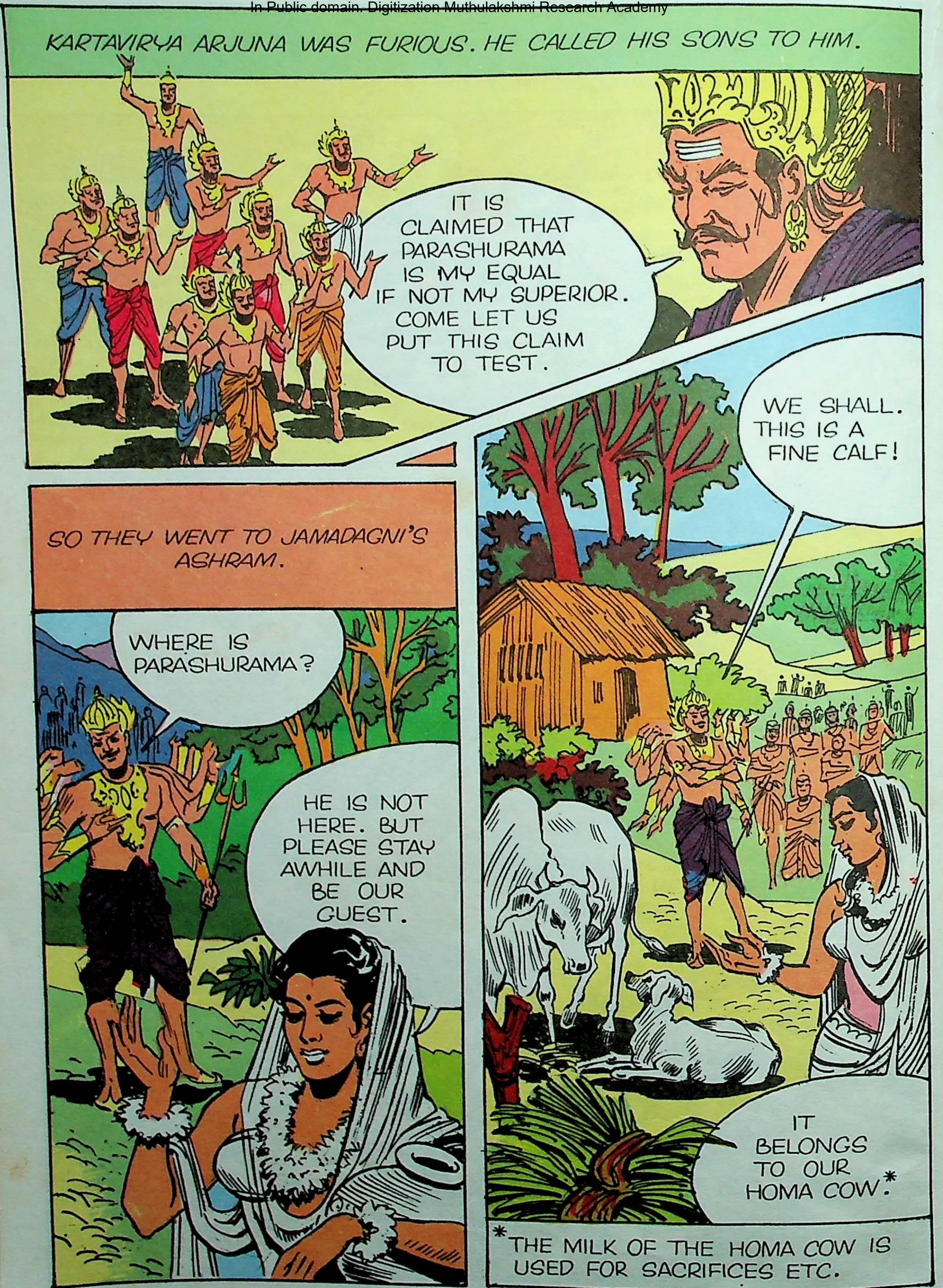

MY SON, I AM GLAD YOU HAVE RETURNED. NOW YOU ARE THERE TO DO IT.
DO WHAT FATHER?


KILL YOUR MOTHER! SHE HAS SINNED.
FATHER, IT IS MY DUTY TO OBEY YOU.


IT IS WELL YOU DO. YOUR BROTHERS REFUSED. I HAVE CURSED THEM WITH MADNESS.
PARASHURAMA, WITH ONE BLOW OF HIS AXE, KILLED HIS MOTHER.
YOUR UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE PLEASES ME. ASK ANY BOON AND IT SHALL BE YOURS.
THIS WAS WHAT PARASHURAMA WAS WAITING FOR.
RESTORE MY MOTHER'S LIFE AND LOVE HER AS BEFORE. GIVE MY BROTHERS BACK THEIR SENSES. AND GIVE ME EVERLASTING LIFE.
EXACTLY AS I HAD FORESEEN!
SO BE IT
JAMADAGNI WAS ONLY TOO GLAD TO GRANT HIM HIS BOONS.

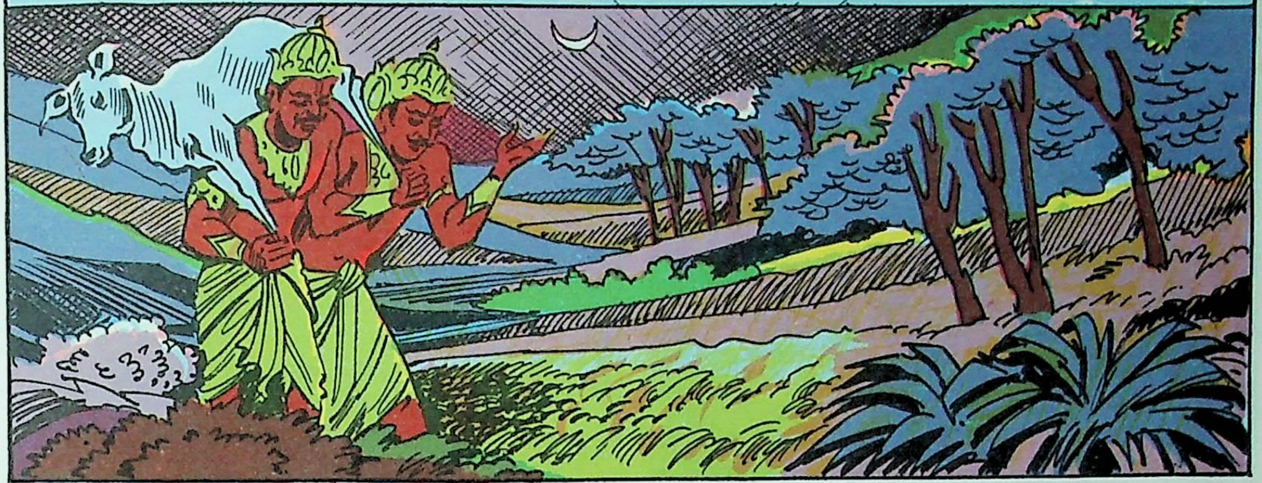
MEANWHILE KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA CONTINUED IN HIS TYRANNY. ONE DAY WHILE PACING ARROGANTLY ON THE SEASHORE, HE BEGAN SHOOTING ARROWS INTO THE WATERS OF THE OCEAN.


A VOICE FROM THE OCEAN STOPPED HIM.
PLEASE DO NOT HARM THE CREATURES THAT LIVE WITHIN ME. I SHALL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK OF ME BUT PLEASE SPARE THEM.
I WILL IF YOU ANSWER THIS QUESTION. IS THERE A MAN WHO CAN RIVAL ME?
YES. PARASHURAMA, THE SON OF JAMADAGNI. HE IS MORE THAN YOUR EQUAL.

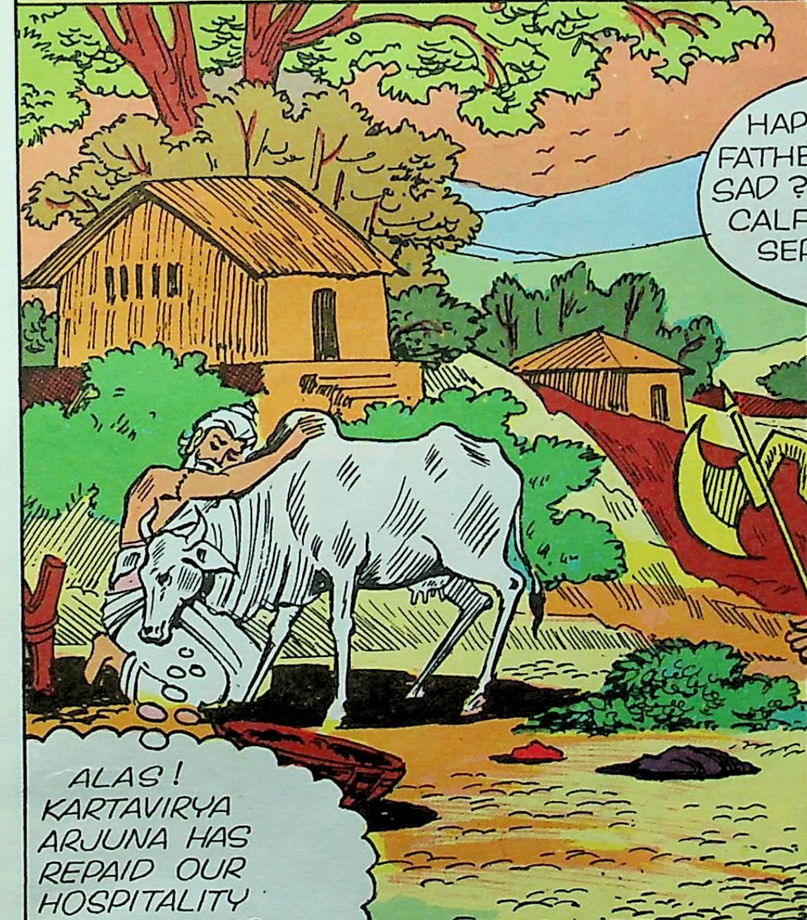

KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA WAS FURIOUS. HE CALLED HIS SONS TO HIM.
IT IS CLAIMED THAT PARASHURAMA IS MY EQUAL IF NOT MY SUPERIOR. COME LET US PUT THIS CLAIM TO TEST.
WE SHALL. THIS IS A FINE CALF!
SO THEY WENT TO JAMADAGNI'S ASHRAM.
WHERE IS PARASHURAMA?
HE IS NOT HERE. BUT PLEASE STAY AWHILE AND BE OUR GUEST.
IT BELONGS TO OUR HOMA COW.*

*THE MILK OF THE HOMA COW IS USED FOR SACRIFICES ETC.

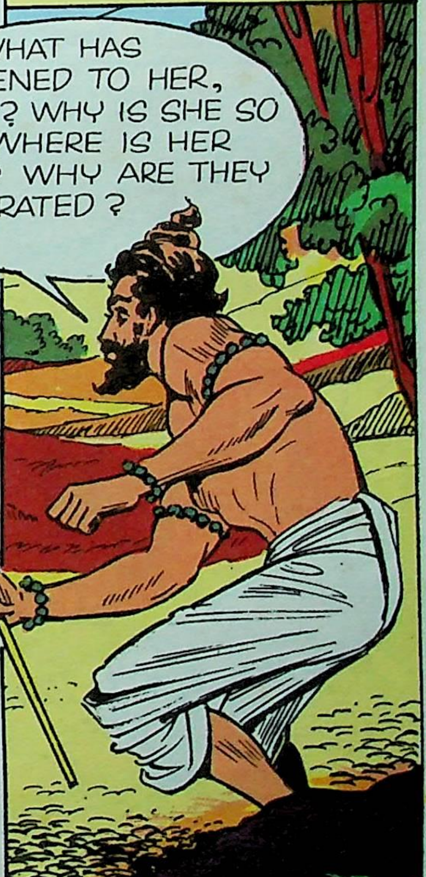
THAT NIGHT THE SONS OF ARJUNA STOLE THE CALF AND MADE OFF WITH IT.

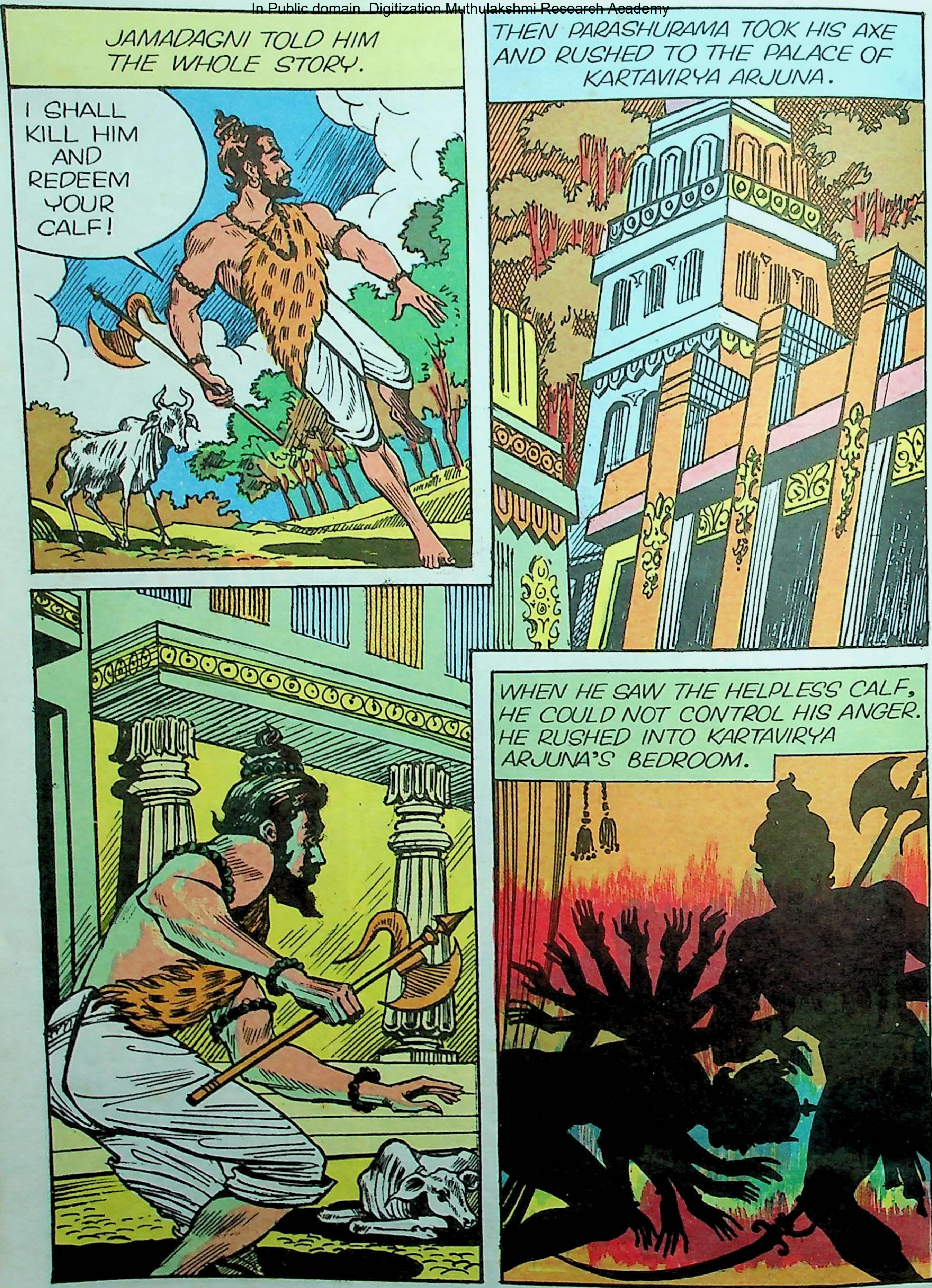


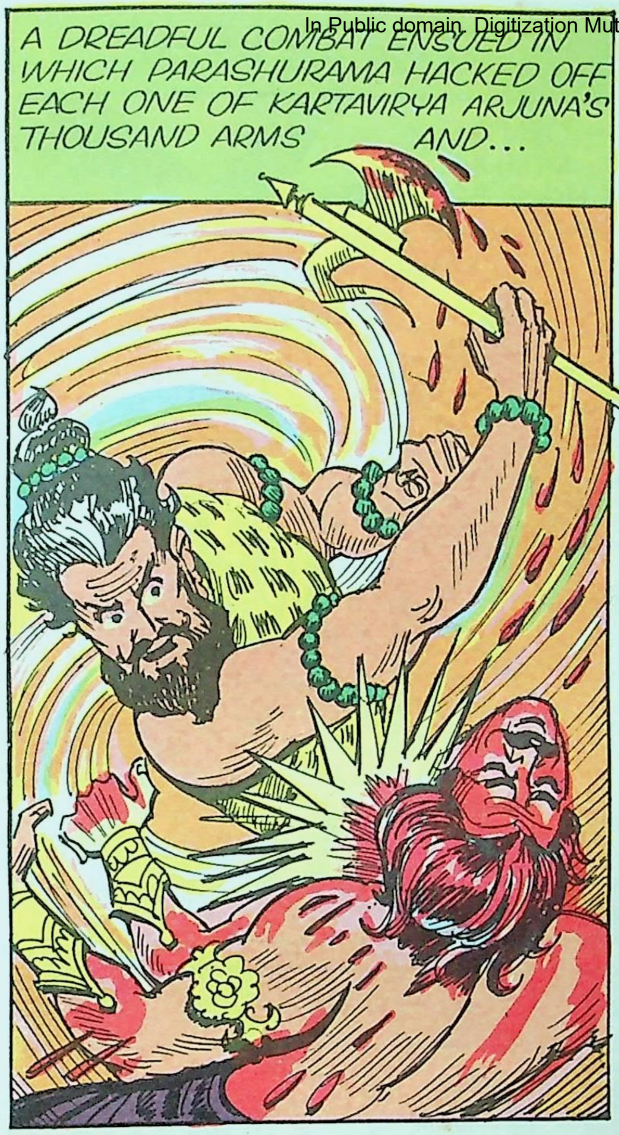
IN THE MORNING WHEN JAMADAGNI CAME OUT OF THE ASHRAM:–


ALAS! KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA HAS REPAID OUR HOSPITALITY BY STEALING YOUR CALF.

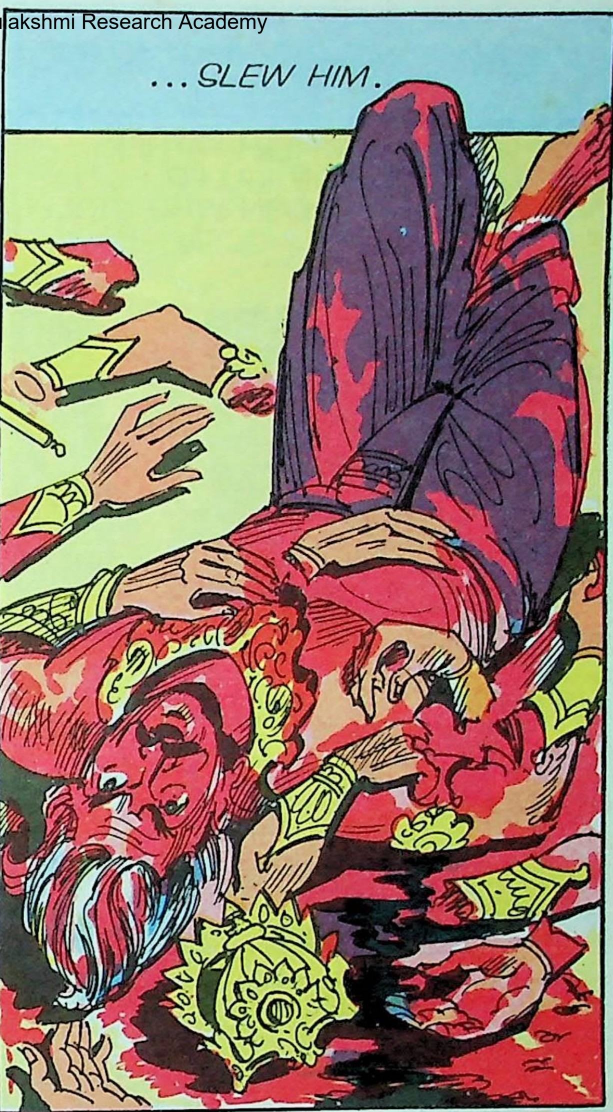
JUST THEN PARASHURAMA RETURNED. HE SAW THEM.


WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HER, FATHER? WHY IS SHE SO SAD? WHERE IS HER CALF? WHY ARE THEY SEPARATED?

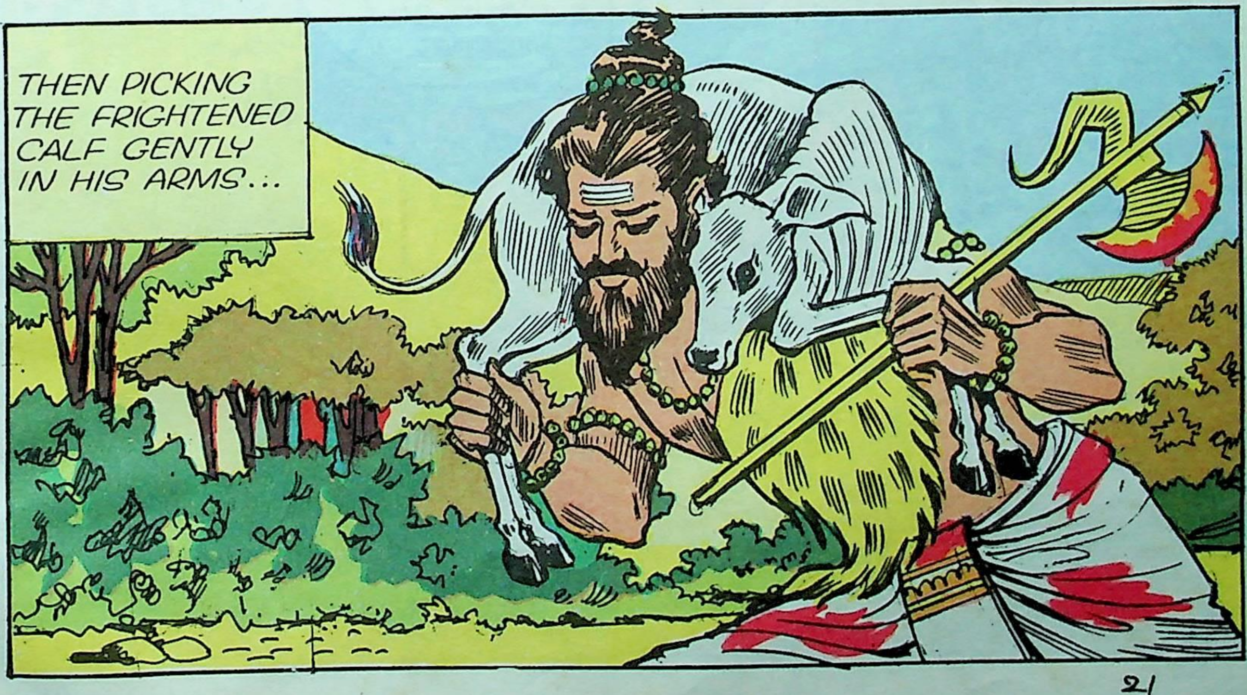

JAMADAGNI TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY.
I SHALL KILL HIM AND REDEEM YOUR CALF!
THEN PARASHURAMA TOOK HIS AXE AND RUSHED TO THE PALACE OF KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA.
WHEN HE SAW THE HELPLESS CALF, HE COULD NOT CONTROL HIS ANGER. HE RUSHED INTO KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA'S BEDROOM.



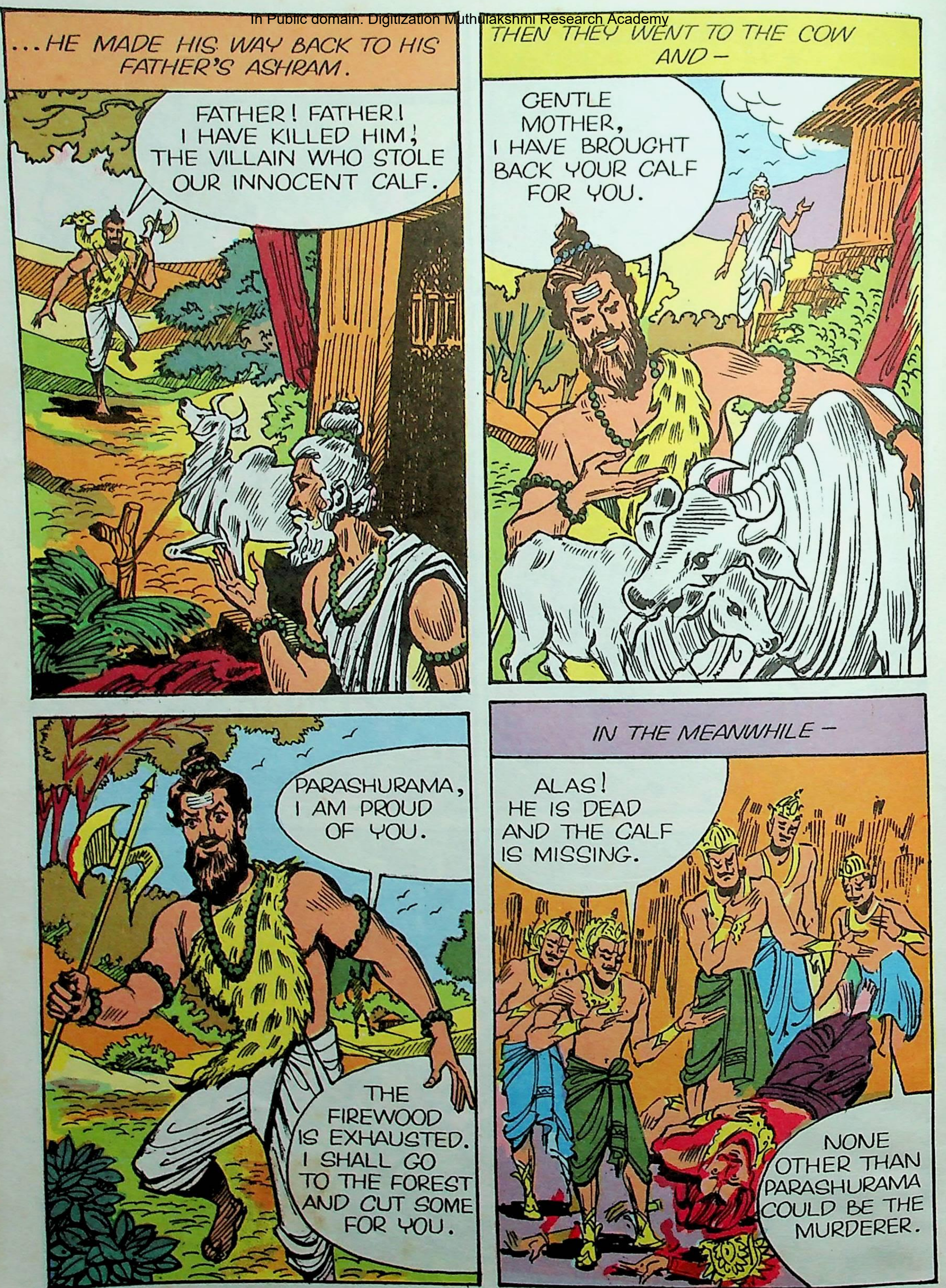
A DREADFUL COMBAT ENSUED IN WHICH PARASHURAMA HACKED OFF EACH ONE OF KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA'S THOUSAND ARMS AND...



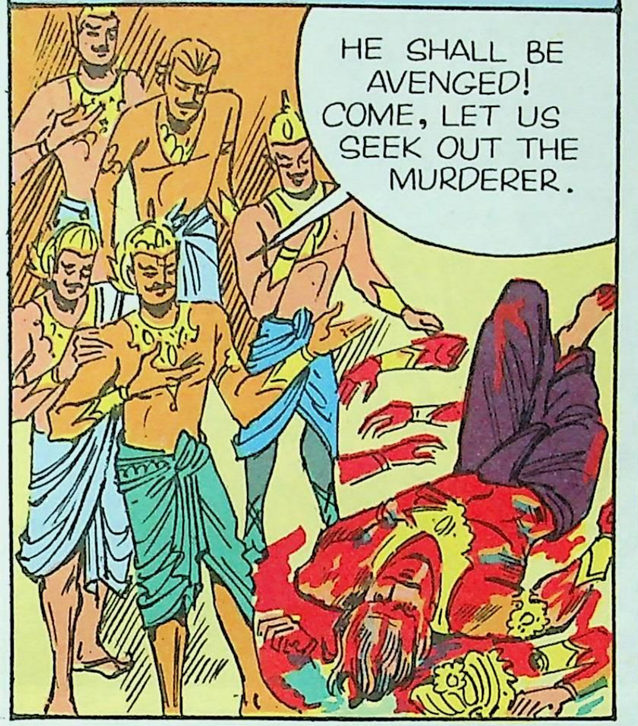
...SLEW HIM.



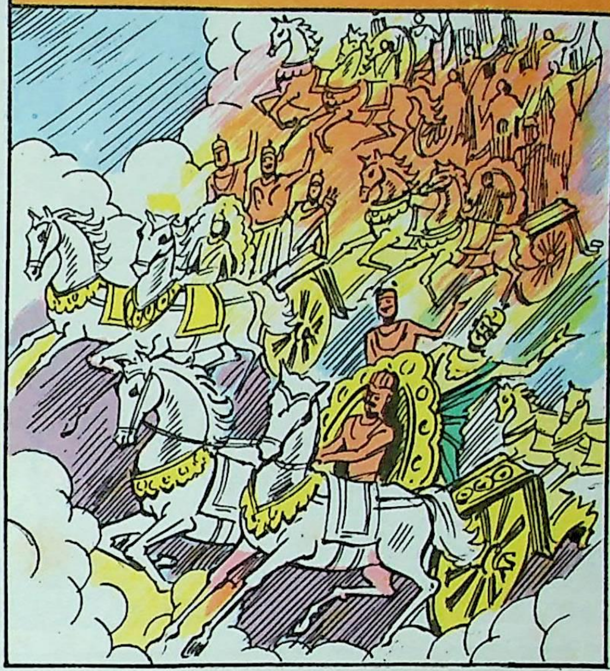
THEN PICKING THE FRIGHTENED CALF GENTLY IN HIS ARMS...


...HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO HIS FATHER'S ASHRAM.
FATHER! FATHER! I HAVE KILLED HIM! THE VILLAIN WHO STOLE OUR INNOCENT CALF.
THEN THEY WENT TO THE COW AND –
GENTLE MOTHER, I HAVE BROUGHT BACK YOUR CALF FOR YOU.
PARASHURAMA, I AM PROUD OF YOU.
THE FIREWOOD IS EXHAUSTED. I SHALL GO TO THE FOREST AND CUT SOME FOR YOU.
IN THE MEANWHILE –
ALAS! HE IS DEAD AND THE CALF IS MISSING.
NONE OTHER THAN PARASHURAMA COULD BE THE MURDERER.

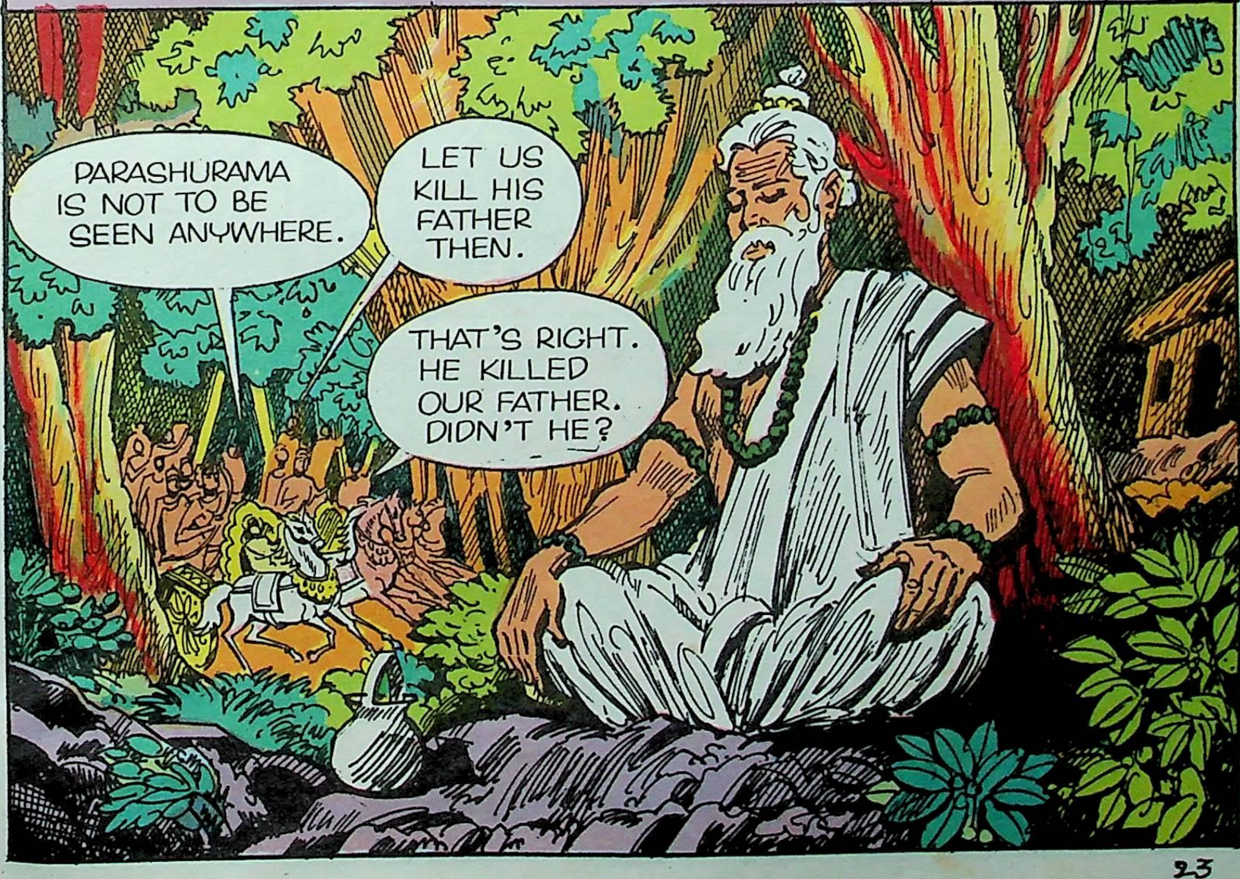
THEY WERE FURIOUS.


HE SHALL BE AVENGED! COME, LET US SEEK OUT THE MURDERER.

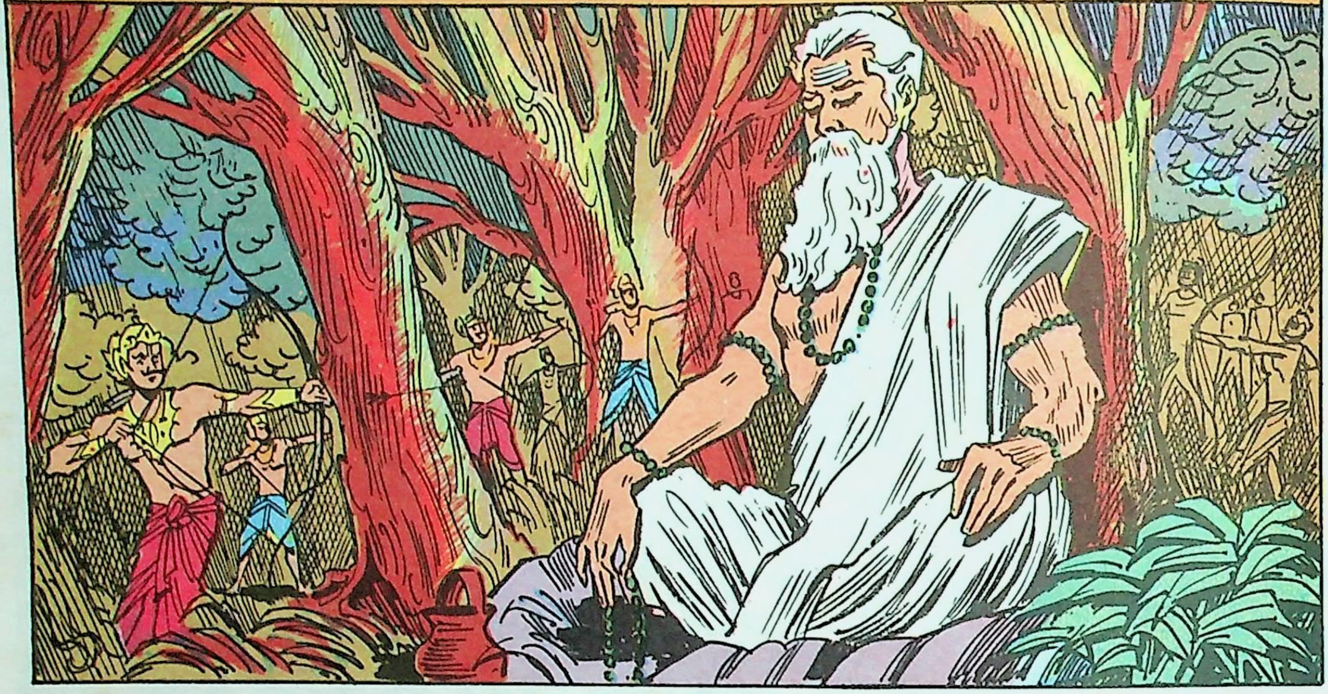
THEY MOUNTED THEIR CHARIOTS AND CHARGED OUT OF THE PALACE.



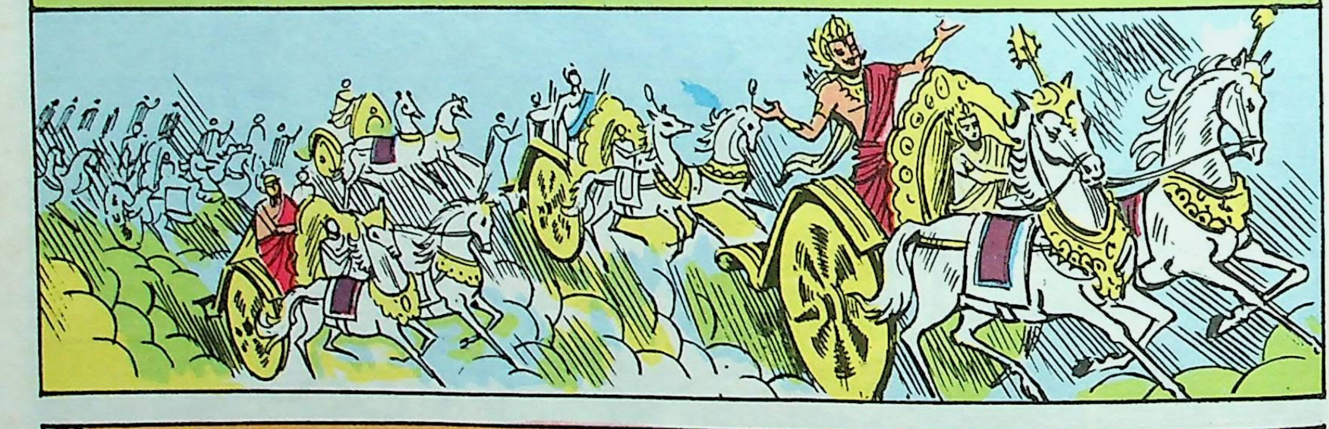
WHEN THEY REACHED THE ASHRAM, JAMADAGNI WAS DEEP IN MEDITATION.

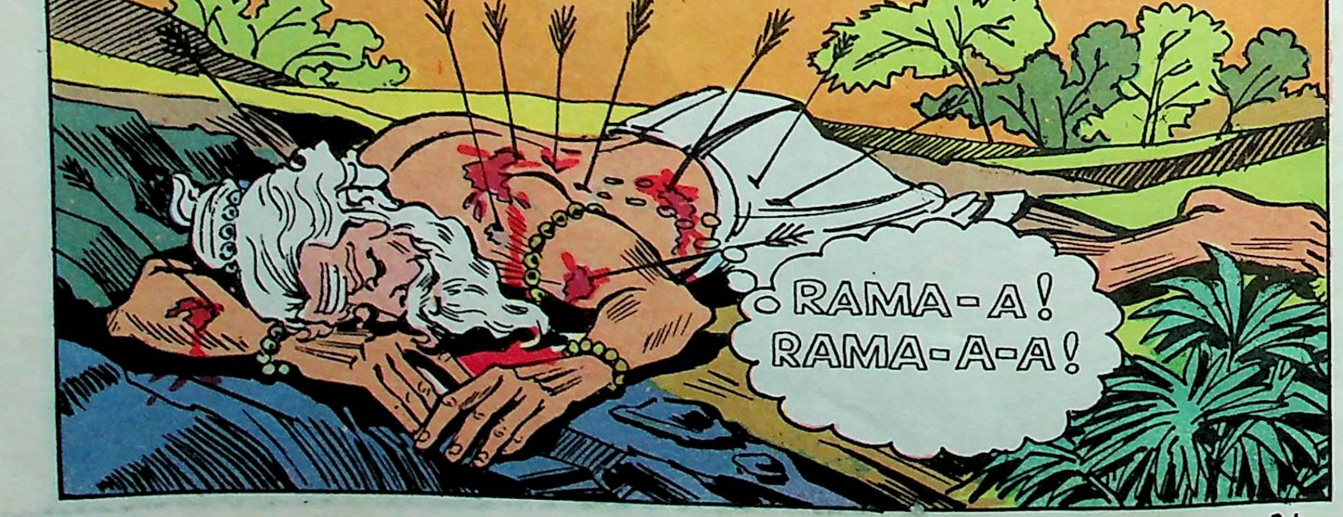

PARASHURAMA IS NOT TO BE SEEN ANYWHERE.
LET US KILL HIS FATHER THEN.
THAT'S RIGHT. HE KILLED OUR FATHER. DIDN'T HE?

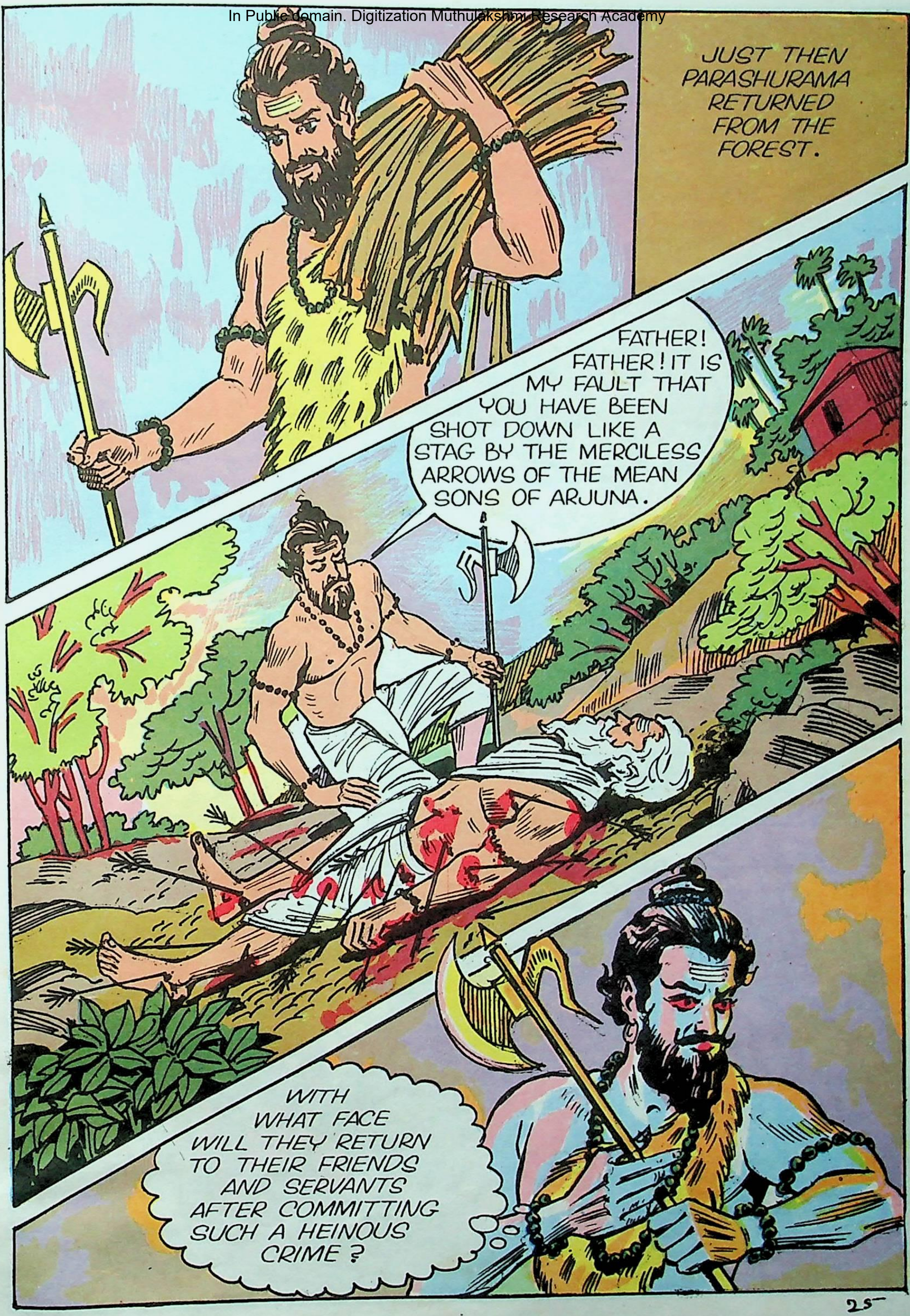
THEY ATTACKED JAMADAGNI AND SHOT ARROWS AT HIM FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.

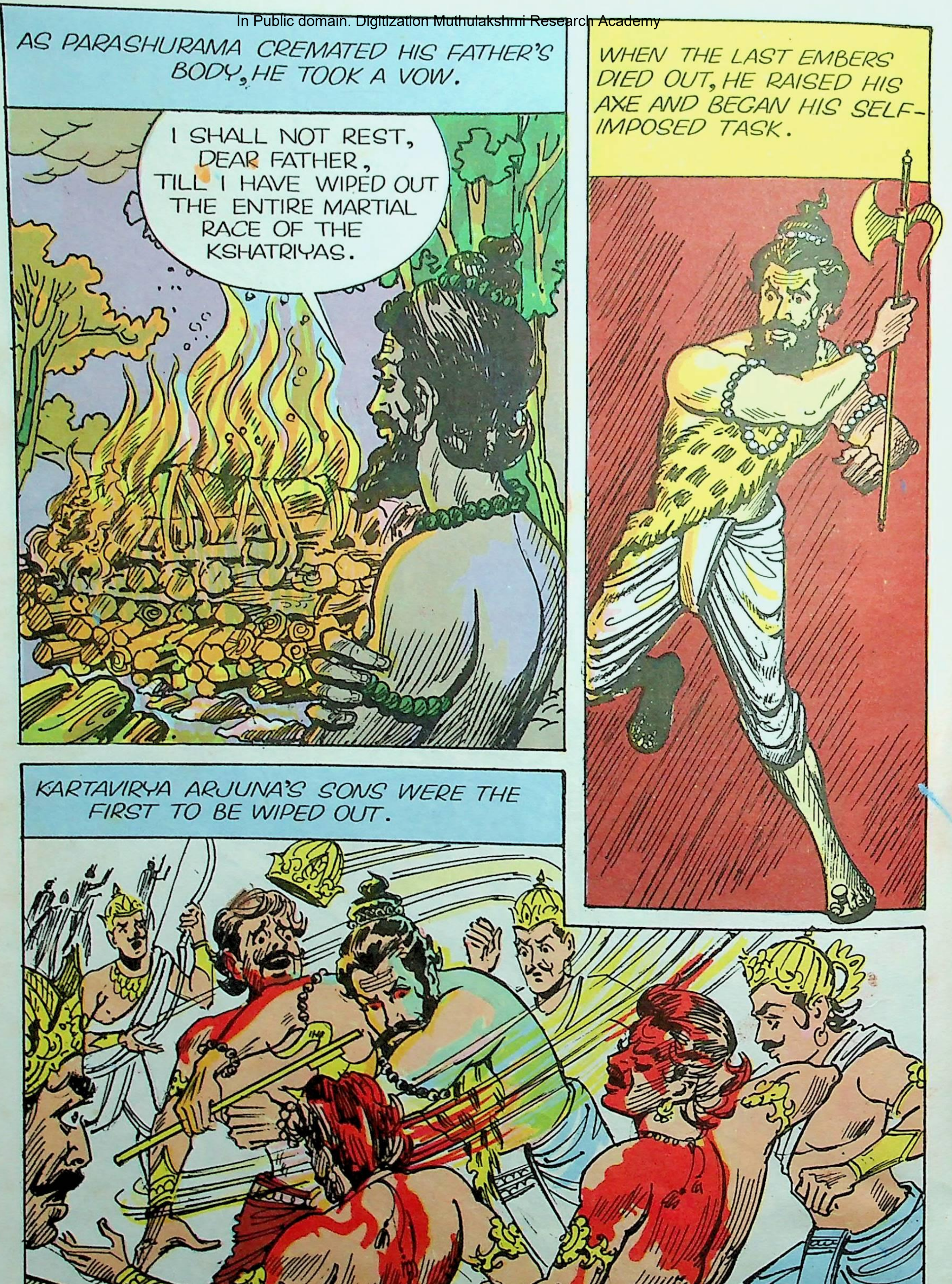


THEY LEFT HIM DYING AND RODE AWAY.




RAMA-A! RAMA-A-A!


JUST THEN PARASHURAMA RETURNED FROM THE FOREST.
FATHER! FATHER! IT IS MY FAULT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN LIKE A STAG BY THE MERCILESS ARROWS OF THE MEAN SONS OF ARJUNA.
WITH WHAT FACE WILL THEY RETURN TO THEIR FRIENDS AND SERVANTS AFTER COMMITTING SUCH A HEINOUS CRIME?



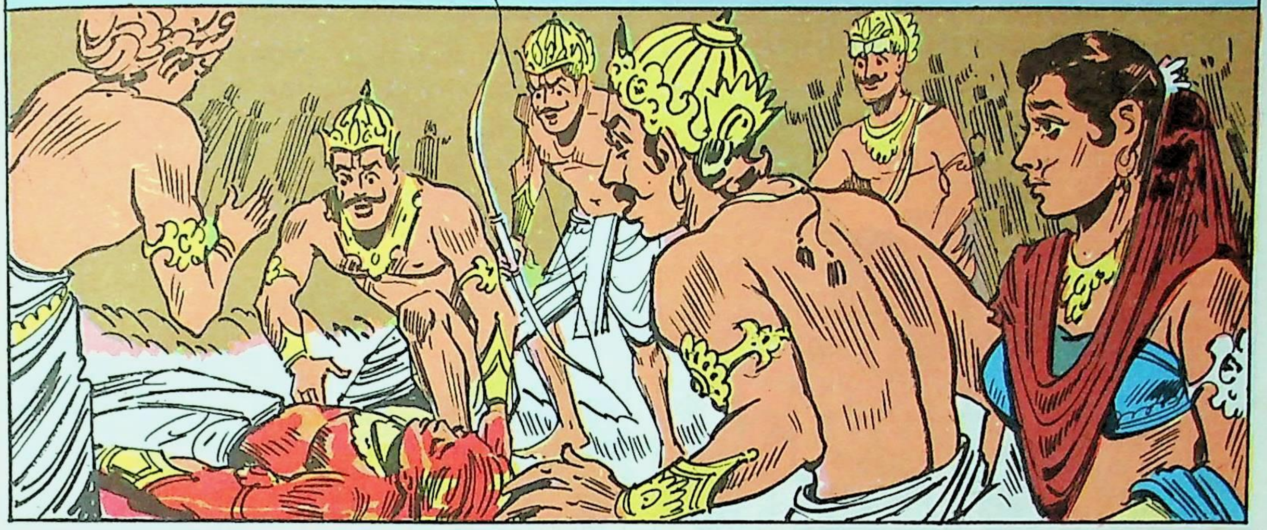
AS PARASHURAMA CREMATED HIS FATHER'S BODY, HE TOOK A VOW.

I SHALL NOT REST, DEAR FATHER, TILL I HAVE WIPED OUT THE ENTIRE MARTIAL RACE OF THE KSHATRIYAS.

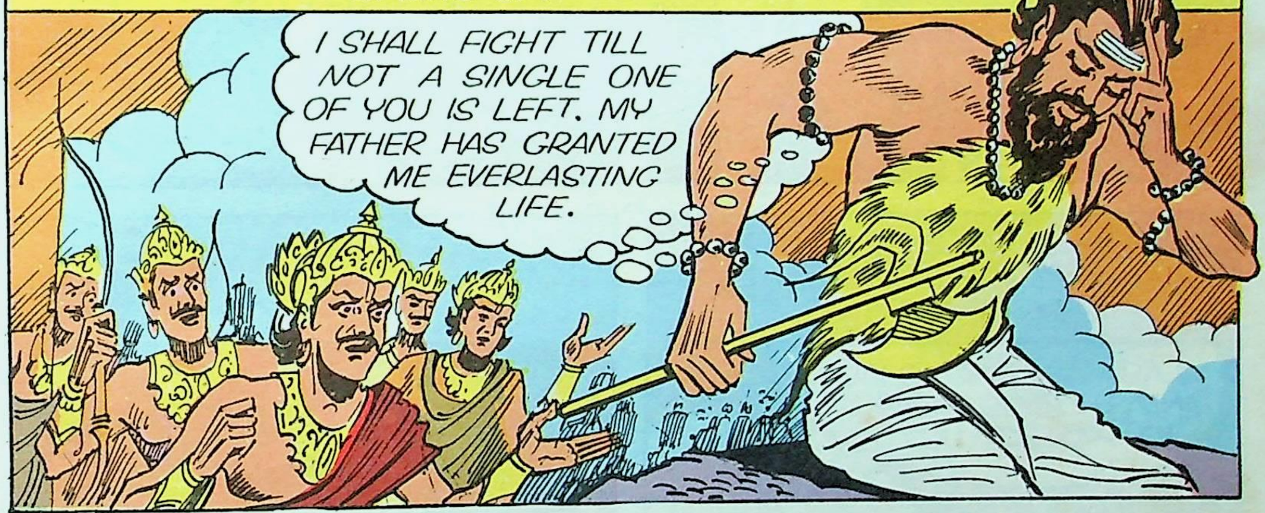
WHEN THE LAST EMBERS DIED OUT, HE RAISED HIS AXE AND BEGAN HIS SELF-IMPOSED TASK.

KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA'S SONS WERE THE FIRST TO BE WIPED OUT.

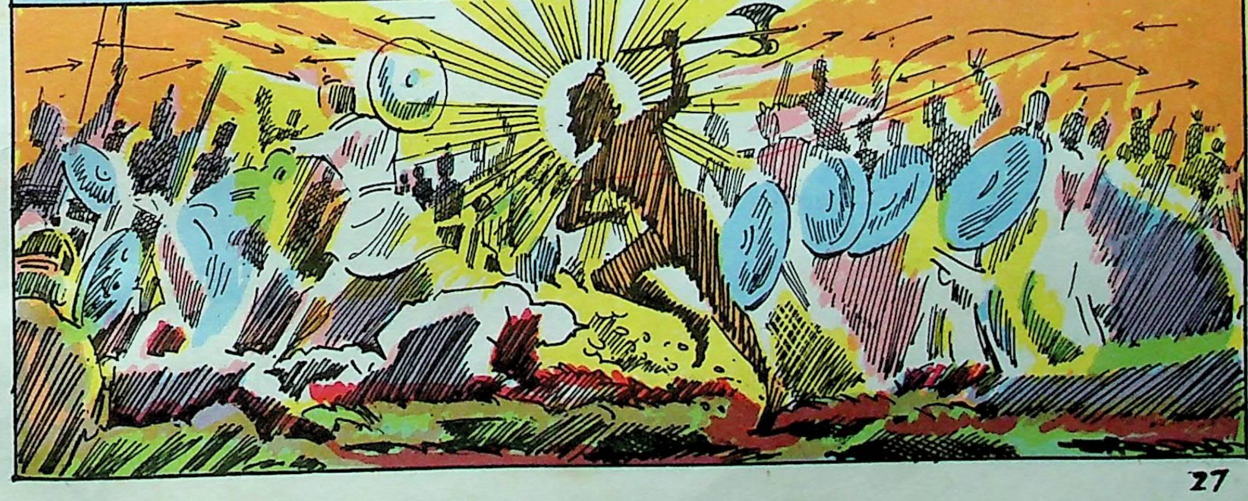
THEN ONE BY ONE HE MASSACRED ALL THE KSHATRIYAS ON EARTH.



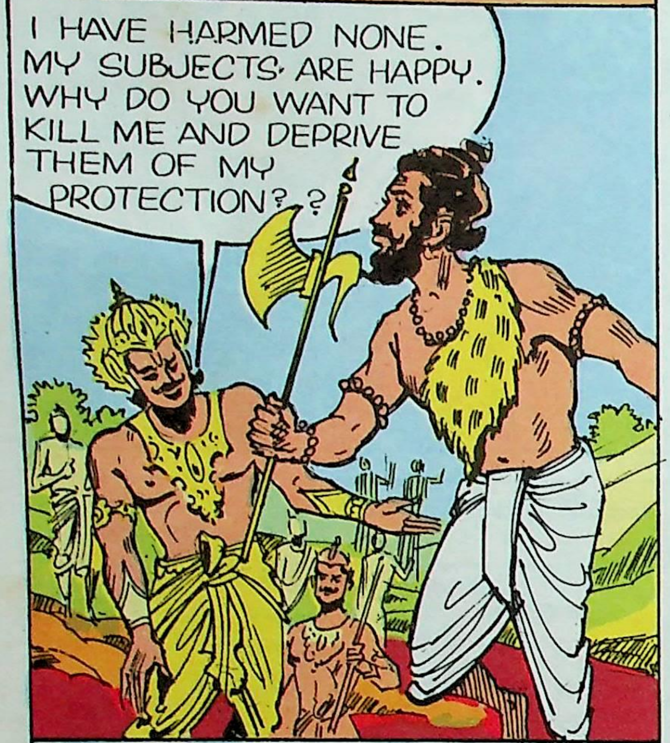
BUT EACH TIME HE KILLED ONE LOT, THEIR SONS WOULD SPRING UP.


I SHALL FIGHT TILL NOT A SINGLE ONE OF YOU IS LEFT. MY FATHER HAS GRANTED ME EVERLASTING LIFE.

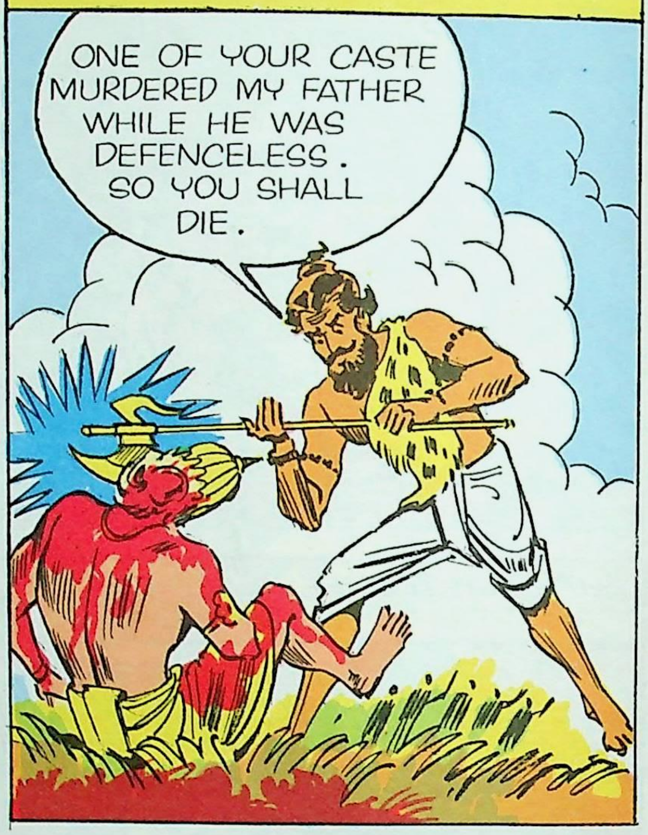
THUS PARASHURAMA PATIENTLY CONTINUED WIPING OUT TWENTY-ONE GENERATIONS OF KSHATRIYAS.



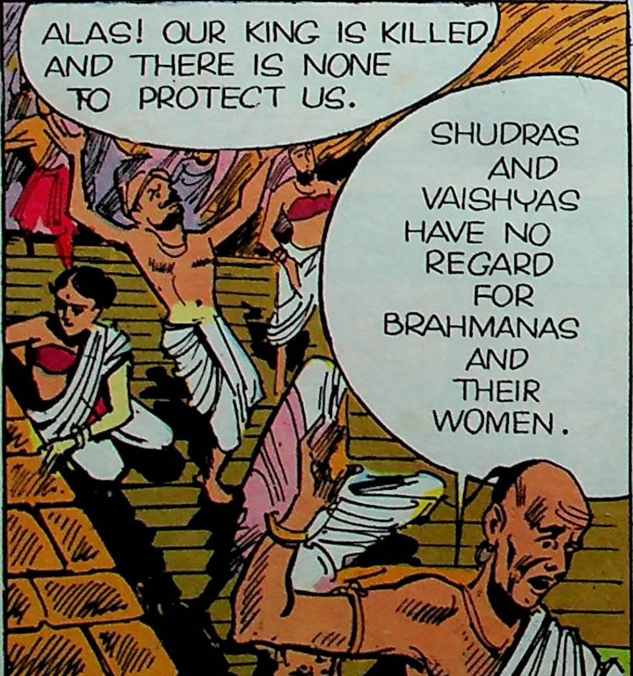
BUT ALAS! HE KILLED WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION BOTH THE EVIL AND THE GOOD KSHATRIYAS.


I HAVE HARMED NONE. MY SUBJECTS ARE HAPPY. WHY DO YOU WANT TO KILL ME AND DEPRIVE THEM OF MY PROTECTION? ?

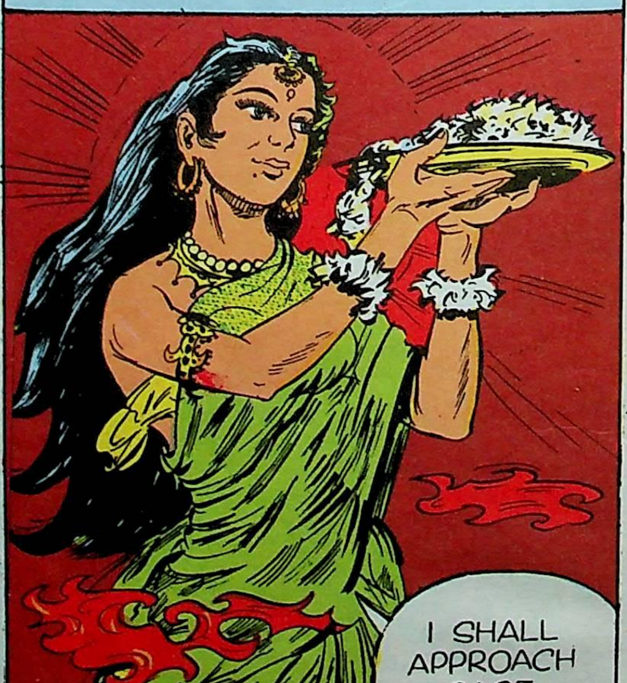
BUT PARASHURAMA WAS RELENTLESS.

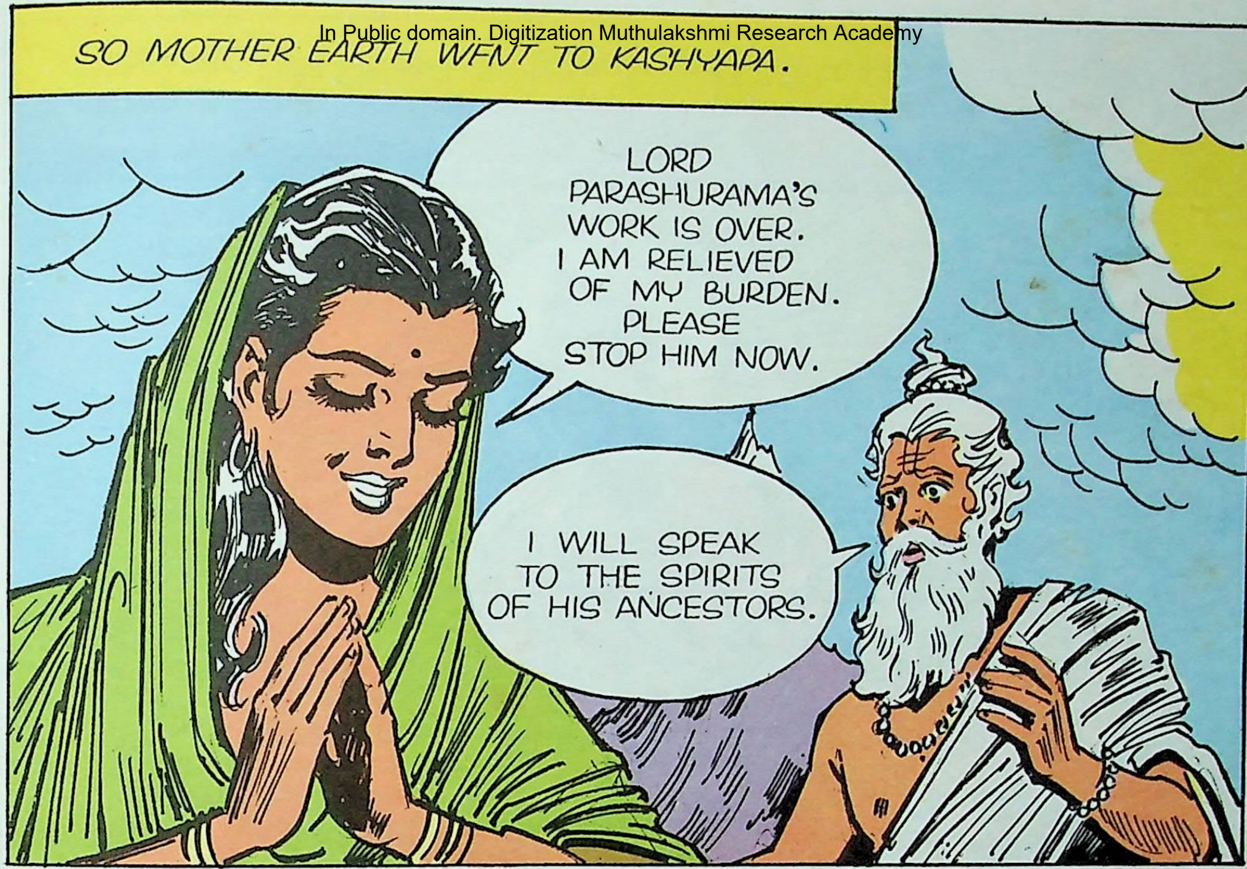

ONE OF YOUR CASTE MURDERED MY FATHER WHILE HE WAS DEFENCELESS. SO YOU SHALL DIE.

SOON THERE WERE NO STRONG GOOD MEN TO PROTECT THE GOOD ON EARTH.


ALAS! OUR KING IS KILLED AND THERE IS NONE TO PROTECT US.
SHUDRAS AND VAISHYAS HAVE NO REGARD FOR BRAHMANAS AND THEIR WOMEN.

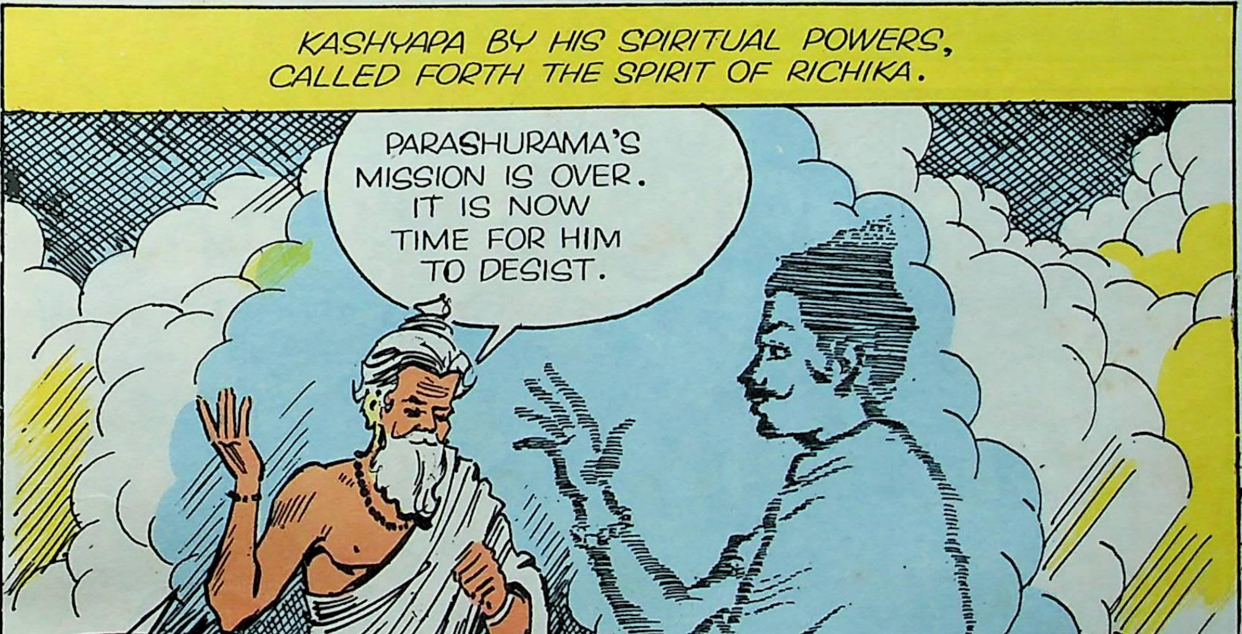
MOTHER EARTH FELT THAT IT WAS TIME TO INTERVENE.


I SHALL APPROACH SAGE KASHYAPA.



SO MOTHER EARTH WENT TO KASHYAPA.

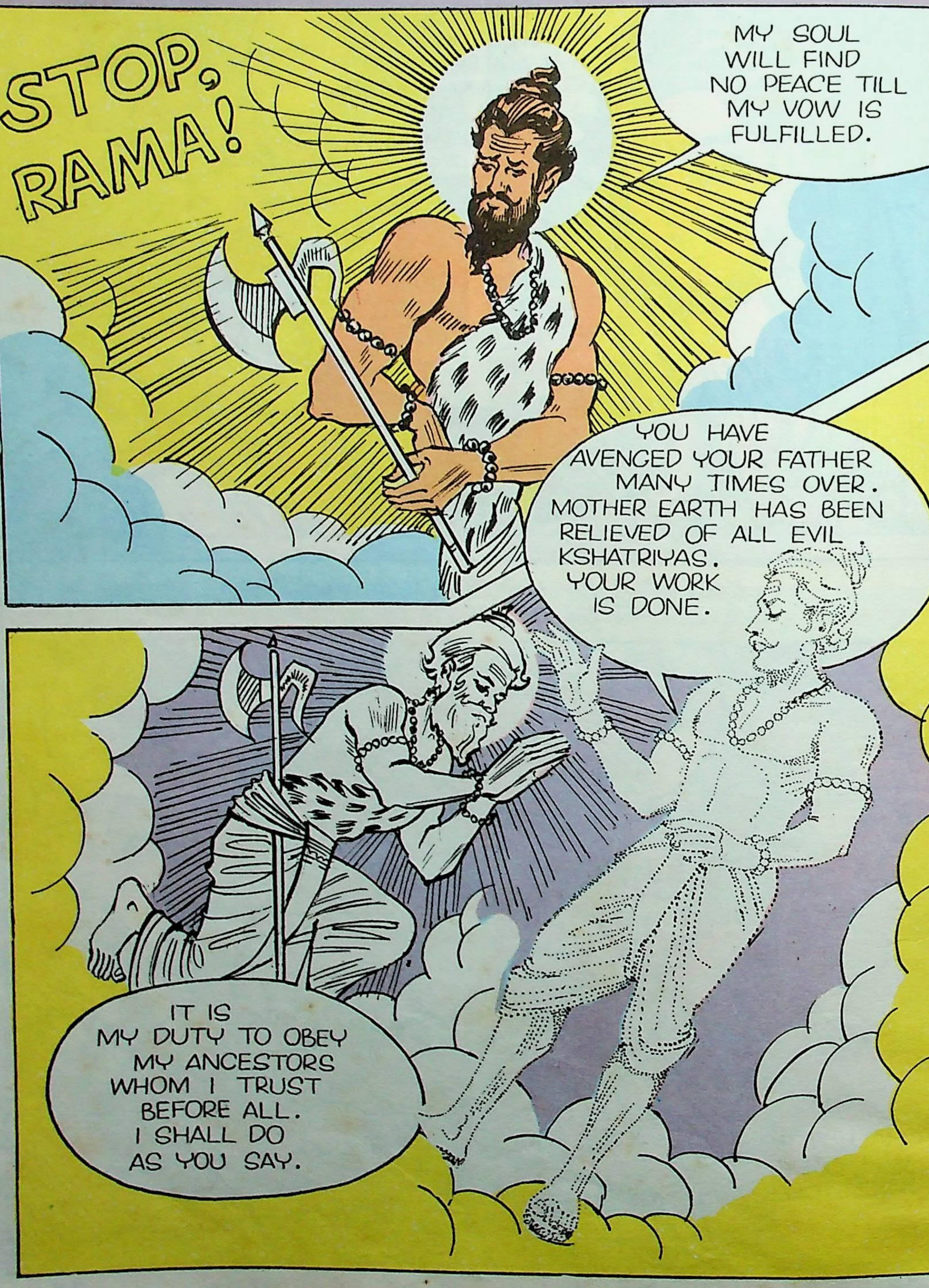
LORD PARASHURAMA'S WORK IS OVER. I AM RELIEVED OF MY BURDEN. PLEASE STOP HIM NOW.
I WILL SPEAK TO THE SPIRITS OF HIS ANCESTORS.

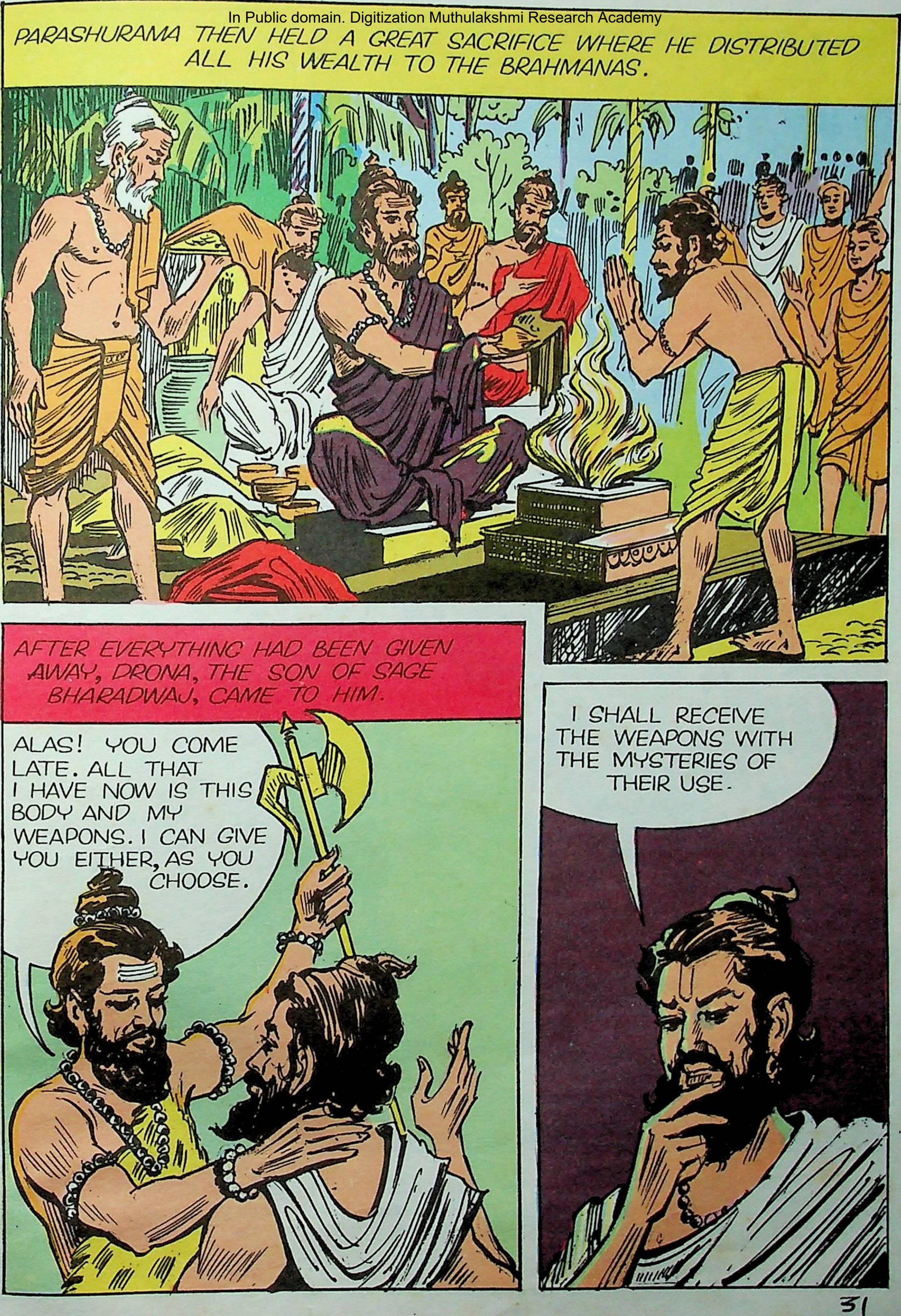


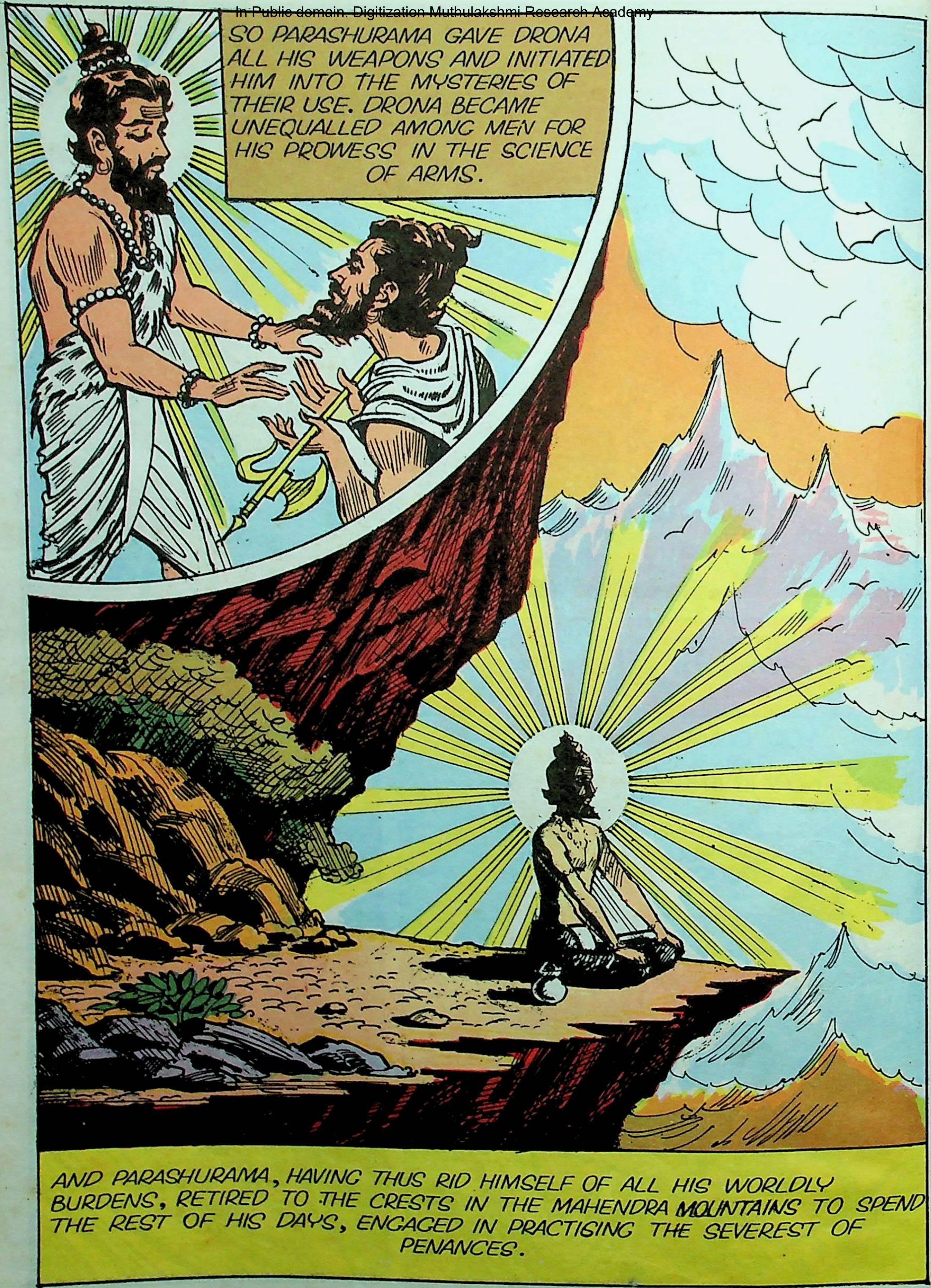
KASHYAPA BY HIS SPIRITUAL POWERS, CALLED FORTH THE SPIRIT OF RICHIKA.

PARASHURAMA'S MISSION IS OVER. IT IS NOW TIME FOR HIM TO DESIST.
SO SHALL IT BE. HE WILL OBEY HIS ANCESTORS.

AND RICHIKA KEPT HIS PROMISE. WHEN PARASHURAMA WAS ABOUT TO RAISE HIS AXE ON A KING OF THE TWENTY-SECOND GENERATION OF KSHATRIYAS –


STOP, RAMA!
MY SOUL WILL FIND NO PEACE TILL MY VOW IS FULFILLED.
YOU HAVE AVENGED YOUR FATHER MANY TIMES OVER. MOTHER EARTH HAS BEEN RELIEVED OF ALL EVIL KSHATRIYAS. YOUR WORK IS DONE.
IT IS MY DUTY TO OBEY MY ANCESTORS WHOM I TRUST BEFORE ALL. I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.


PARASHURAMA THEN HELD A GREAT SACRIFICE WHERE HE DISTRIBUTED ALL HIS WEALTH TO THE BRAHMANAS.
AFTER EVERYTHING HAD BEEN GIVEN AWAY, DRONA, THE SON OF SAGE BHARADWAJ, CAME TO HIM.
ALAS! YOU COME LATE. ALL THAT I HAVE NOW IS THIS BODY AND MY WEAPONS. I CAN GIVE YOU EITHER, AS YOU CHOOSE.
I SHALL RECEIVE THE WEAPONS WITH THE MYSTERIES OF THEIR USE.



SO PARASHURAMA GAVE DRONA ALL HIS WEAPONS AND INITIATED HIM INTO THE MYSTERIES OF THEIR USE. DRONA BECAME UNEQUALLED AMONG MEN FOR HIS PROWESS IN THE SCIENCE OF ARMS.

AND PARASHURAMA, HAVING THUS RID HIMSELF OF ALL HIS WORLDLY BURDENS, RETIRED TO THE CRESTS IN THE MAHENDRA MOUNTAINS TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS DAYS, ENGAGED IN PRACTISING THE SEVEREST OF PENANCES.

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

KARTTIKEYA

A SON OF SHIVA

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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

KARTTIKEYA

The Puranas describe Karttikeya, a son of Shiva, as the commander-in-chief of the celestial army. He is also known as Subrahmanya, Skanda, Guha and Kumara. To the Tamil-speaking people he is Murugan. The six-headed, twelve-armed Karttikeya seated on a peacock is the symbol of youth, beauty, valour and supreme wisdom.

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C.M.Vitankar

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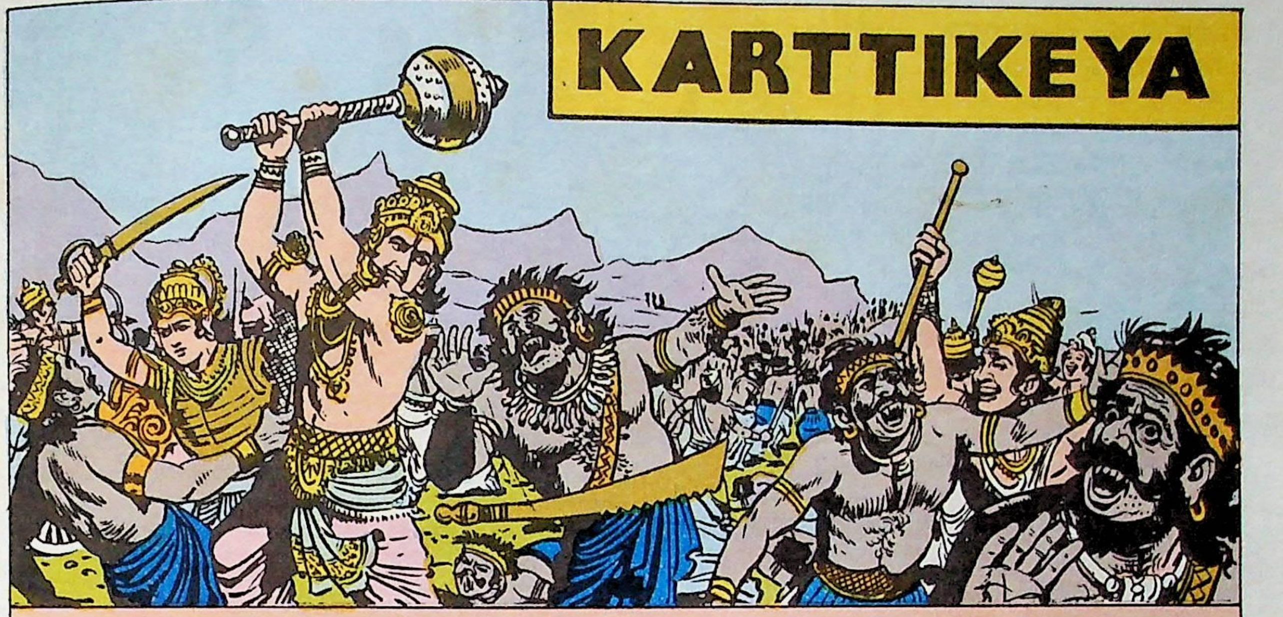
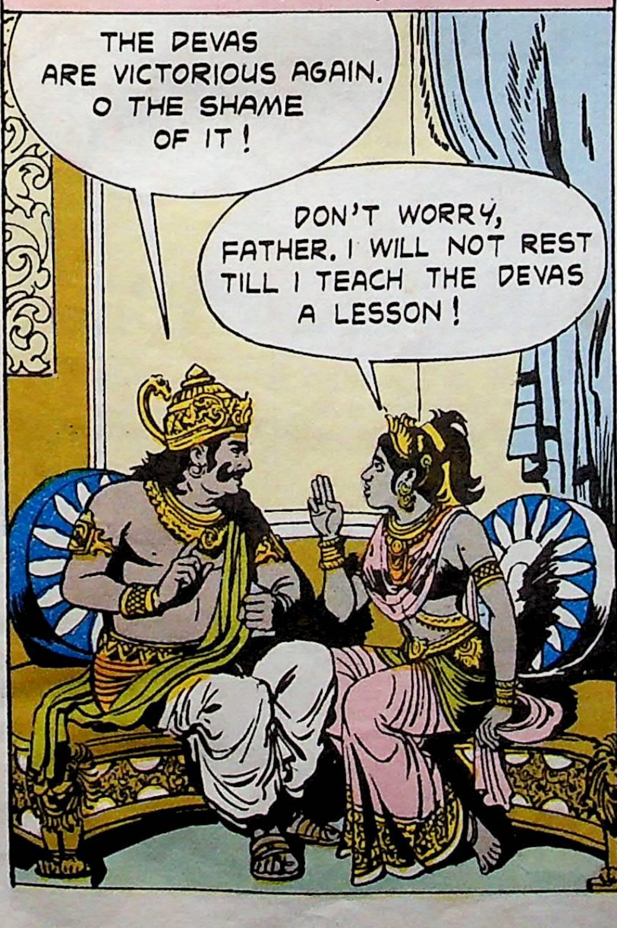
Anant Pai

KARTTIKEYA

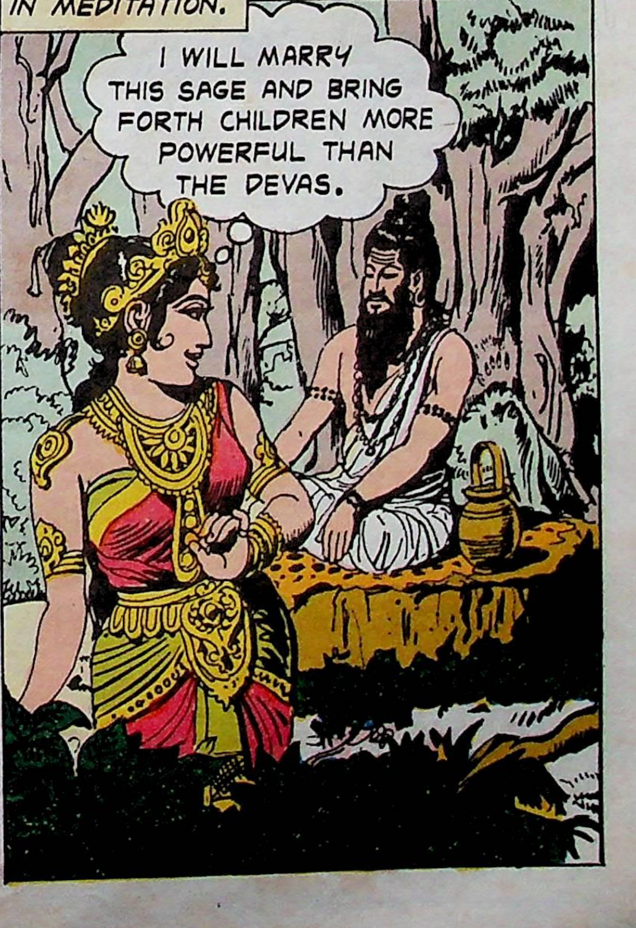


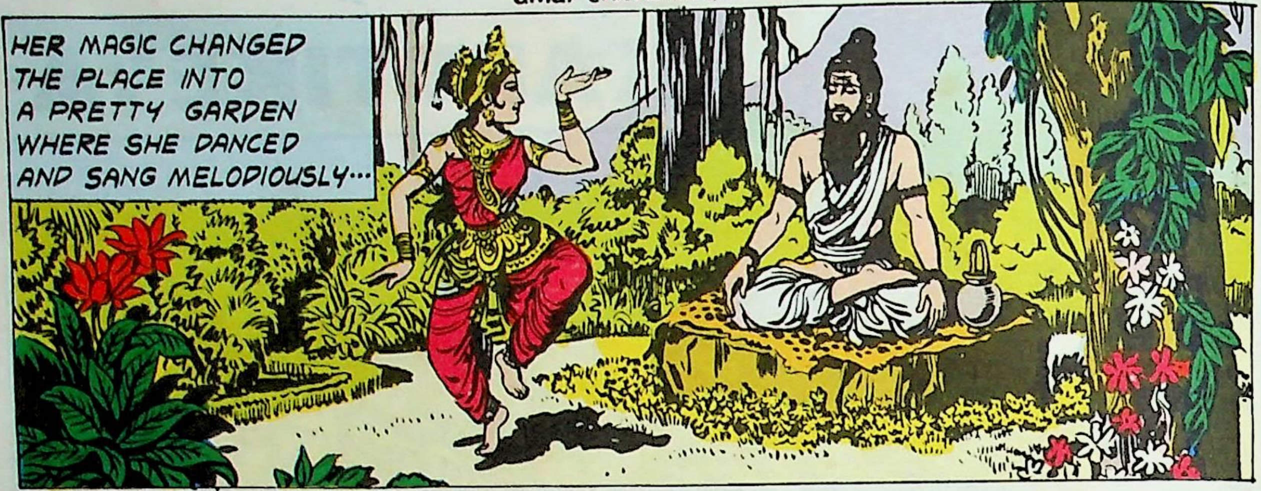
IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS WERE FOREVER AT WAR AND OFTEN IT WAS THE ASURAS WHO WERE DEFEATED.

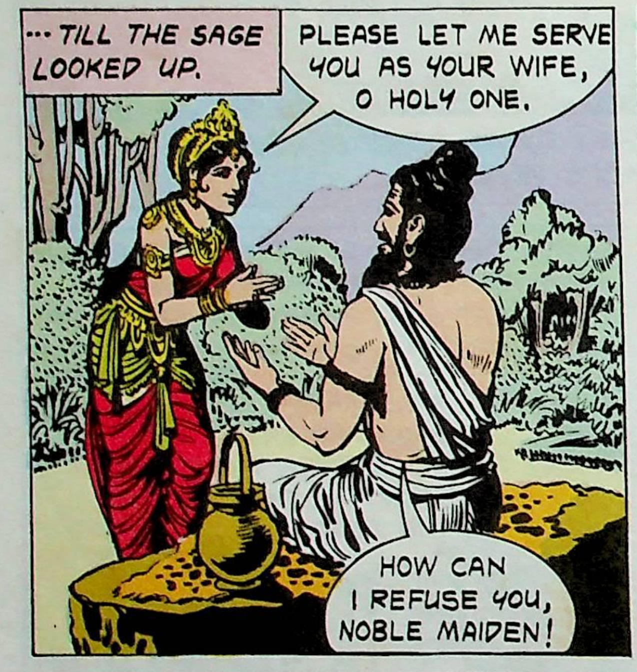
AFTER ONE CRUSHING DEFEAT, AN ASURA KING NAMED AKHIRSEN WENT TO HIS DAUGHTER, MAYA, A SORCERESS.

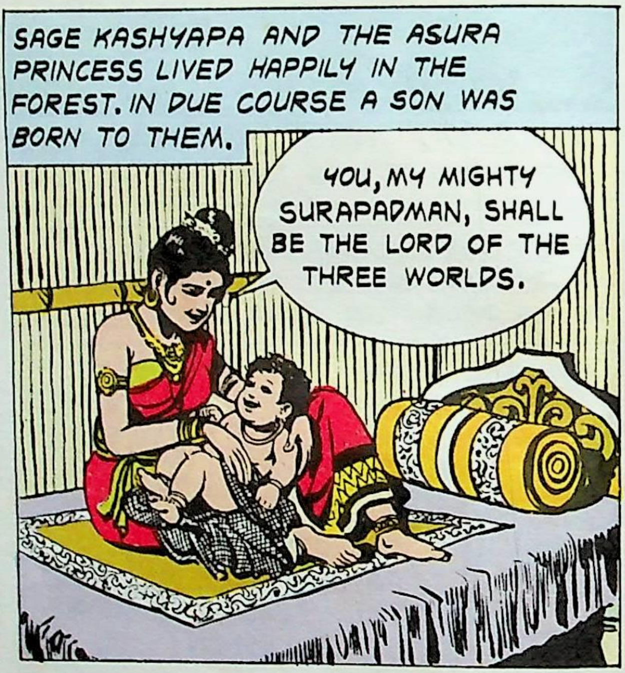

THE DEVAS ARE VICTORIOUS AGAIN. O THE SHAME OF IT!
DON'T WORRY, FATHER. I WILL NOT REST TILL I TEACH THE DEVAS A LESSON!

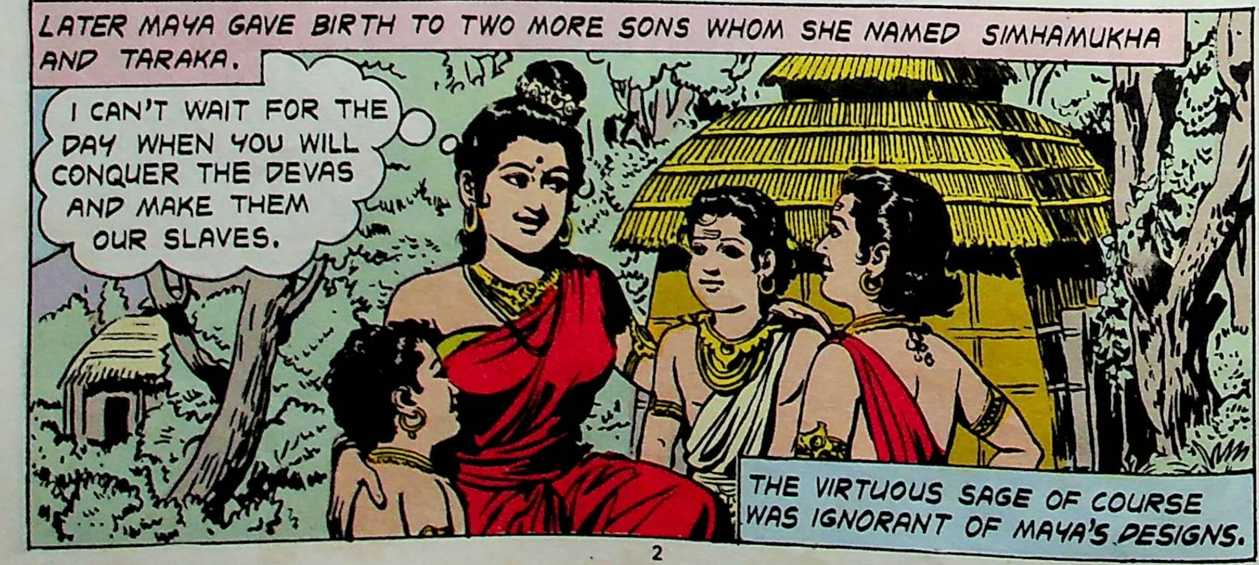
TAKING THE FORM OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN MAYA WENT TO THE FOREST WHERE THE GREAT SAGE KASHYAPA SAT DEEP IN MEDITATION.

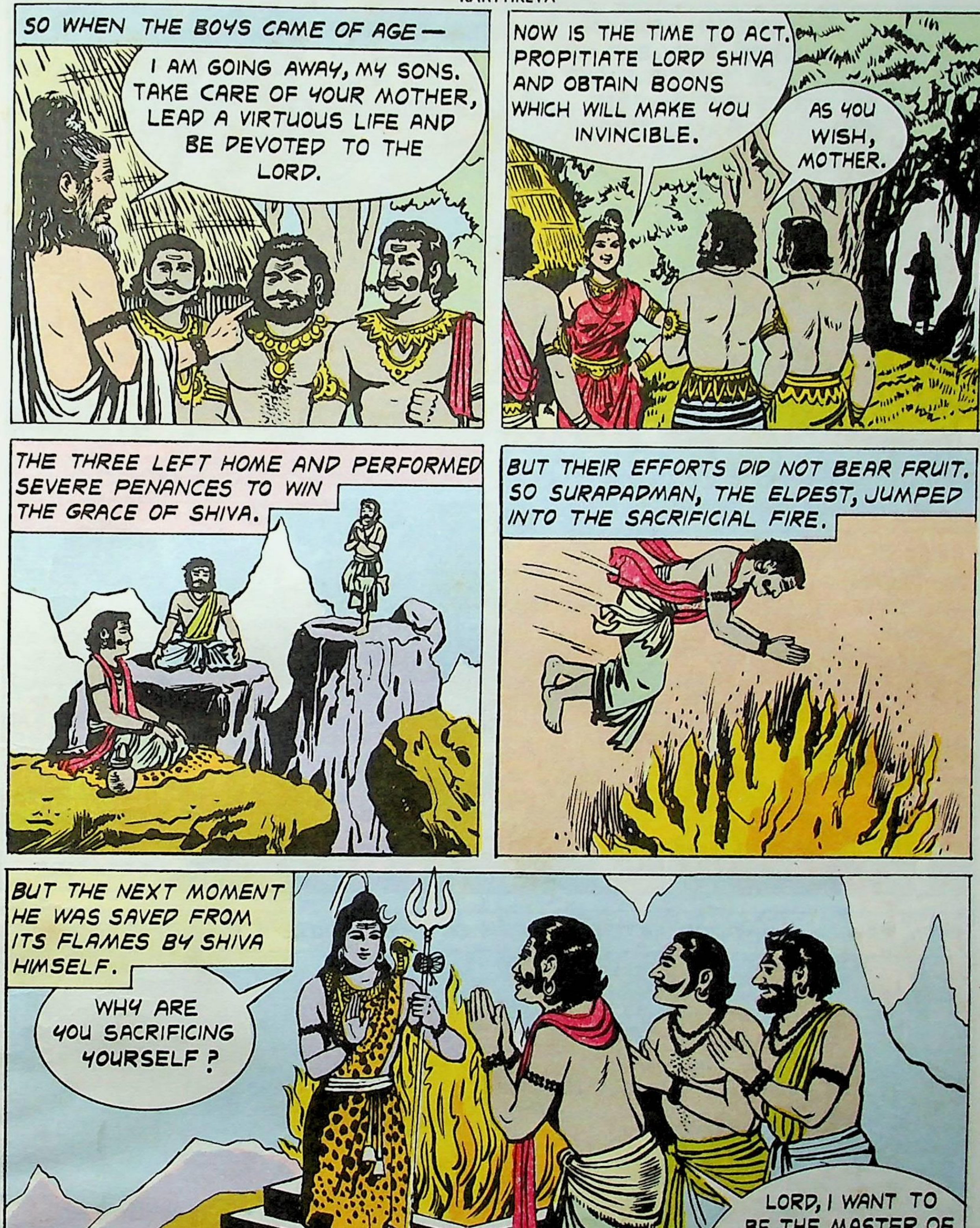

I WILL MARRY THIS SAGE AND BRING FORTH CHILDREN MORE POWERFUL THAN THE DEVAS.

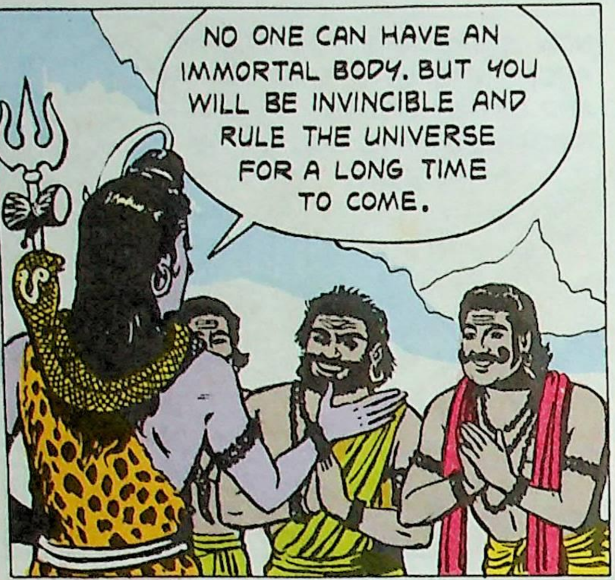

HER MAGIC CHANGED THE PLACE INTO A PRETTY GARDEN WHERE SHE DANCED AND SANG MELODIOUSLY...

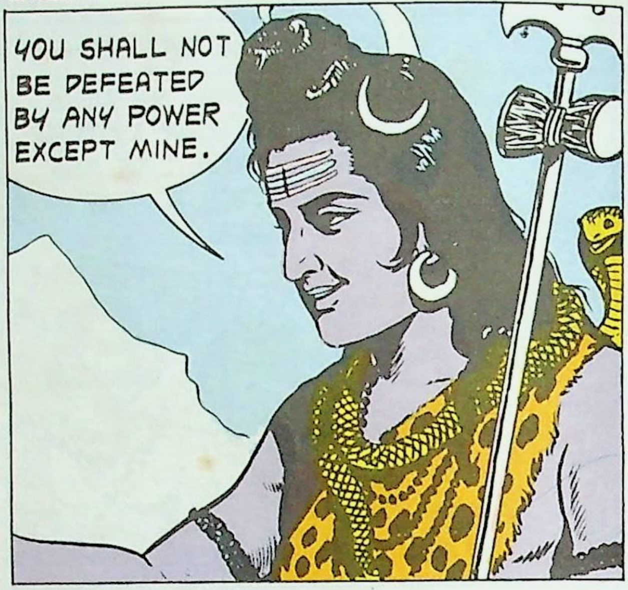

...TILL THE SAGE LOOKED UP.
PLEASE LET ME SERVE YOU AS YOUR WIFE, O HOLY ONE.
HOW CAN I REFUSE YOU, NOBLE MAIDEN!

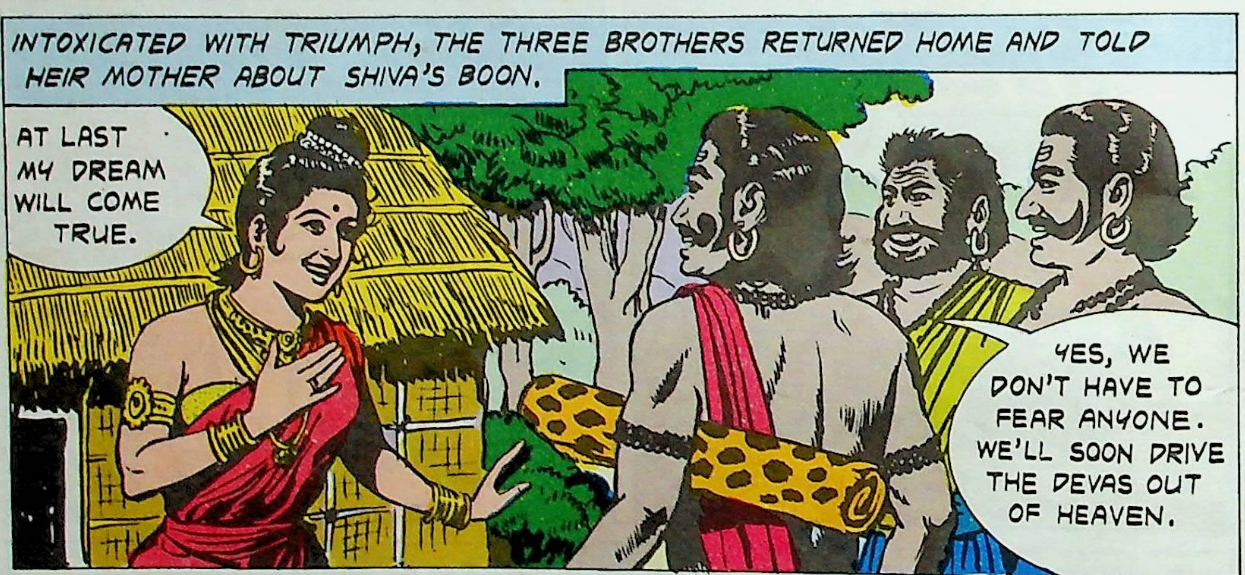

SAGE KASHYAPA AND THE ASURA PRINCESS LIVED HAPPILY IN THE FOREST. IN DUE COURSE A SON WAS BORN TO THEM.
YOU, MY MIGHTY SURAPADMAN, SHALL BE THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS.


LATER MAYA GAVE BIRTH TO TWO MORE SONS WHOM SHE NAMED SIMHAMUKHA AND TARAKA.
I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU WILL CONQUER THE DEVAS AND MAKE THEM OUR SLAVES.
THE VIRTUOUS SAGE OF COURSE WAS IGNORANT OF MAYA'S DESIGNS.

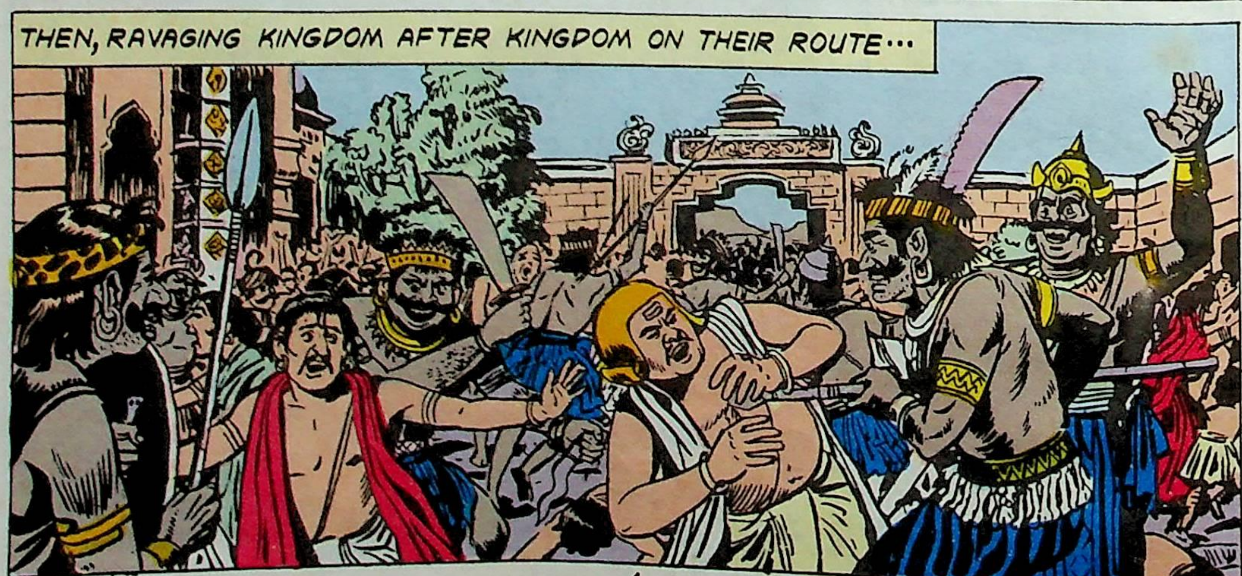

SO WHEN THE BOYS CAME OF AGE—
I AM GOING AWAY, MY SONS. TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOTHER, LEAD A VIRTUOUS LIFE AND BE DEVOTED TO THE LORD.
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND OBTAIN BOONS WHICH WILL MAKE YOU INVINCIBLE.
AS YOU WISH, MOTHER.
THE THREE LEFT HOME AND PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO WIN THE GRACE OF SHIVA.
BUT THEIR EFFORTS DID NOT BEAR FRUIT. SO SURAPADMAN, THE ELDEST, JUMPED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.
BUT THE NEXT MOMENT HE WAS SAVED FROM ITS FLAMES BY SHIVA HIMSELF.
WHY ARE YOU SACRIFICING YOURSELF ?
LORD, I WANT TO BE THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE. I WANT TO HAVE A BODY THAT WILL NOT PERISH.

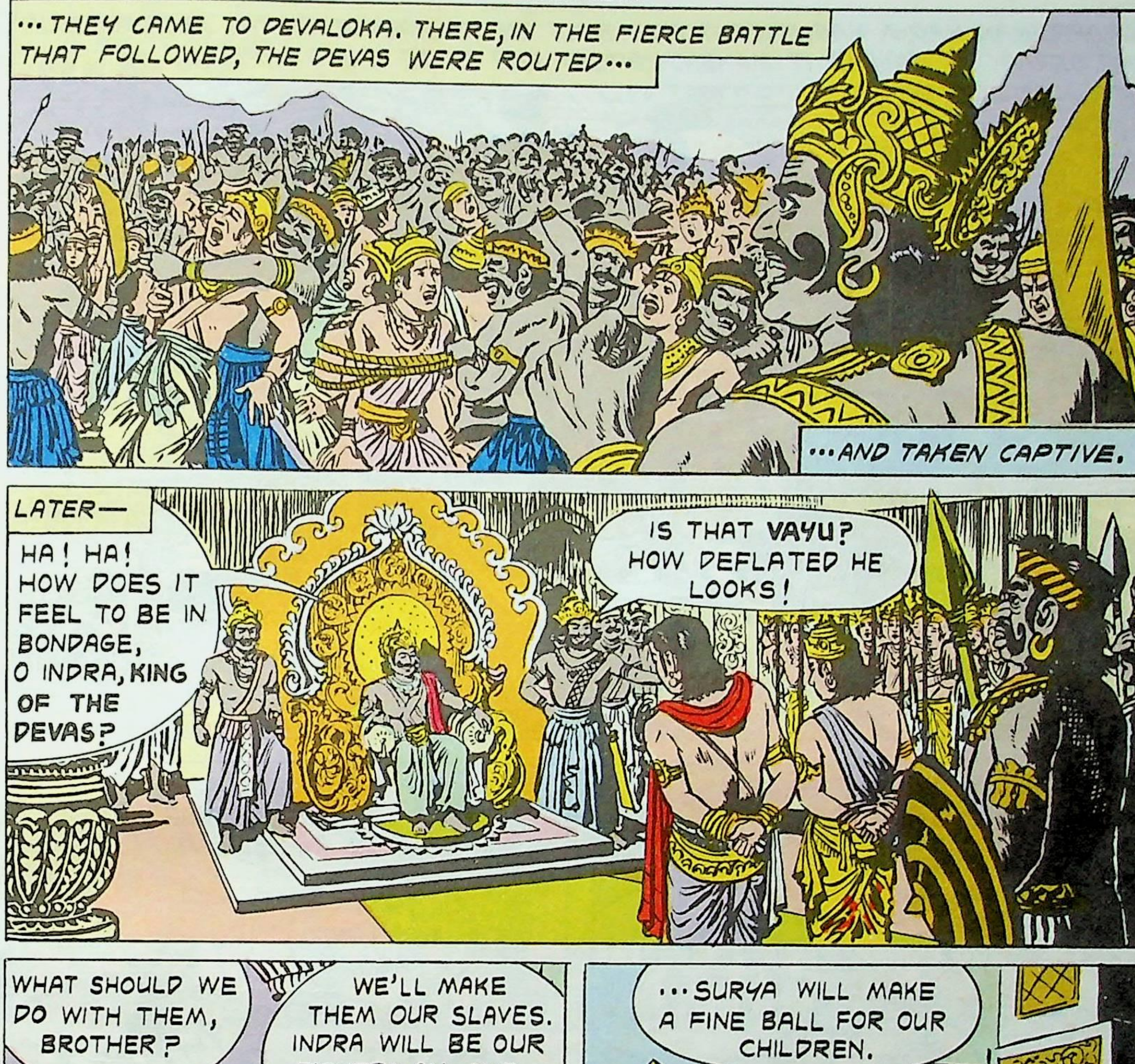

NO ONE CAN HAVE AN IMMORTAL BODY. BUT YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE AND RULE THE UNIVERSE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

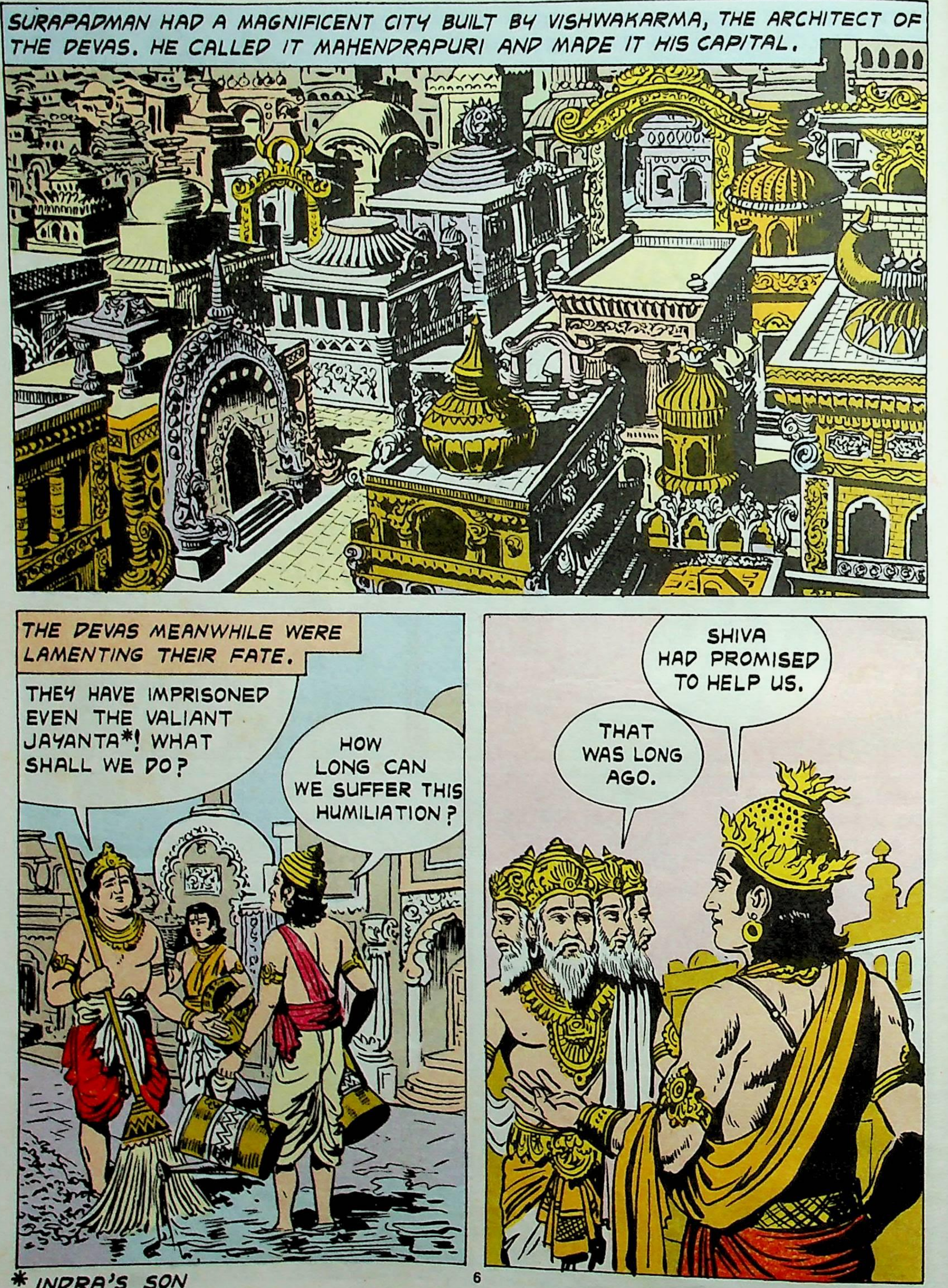

YOU SHALL NOT BE DEFEATED BY ANY POWER EXCEPT MINE.


INTOXICATED WITH TRIUMPH, THE THREE BROTHERS RETURNED HOME AND TOLD HEIR MOTHER ABOUT SHIVA'S BOON.

AT LAST MY DREAM WILL COME TRUE.
YES, WE DON'T HAVE TO FEAR ANYONE. WE'LL SOON DRIVE THE DEVAS OUT OF HEAVEN.

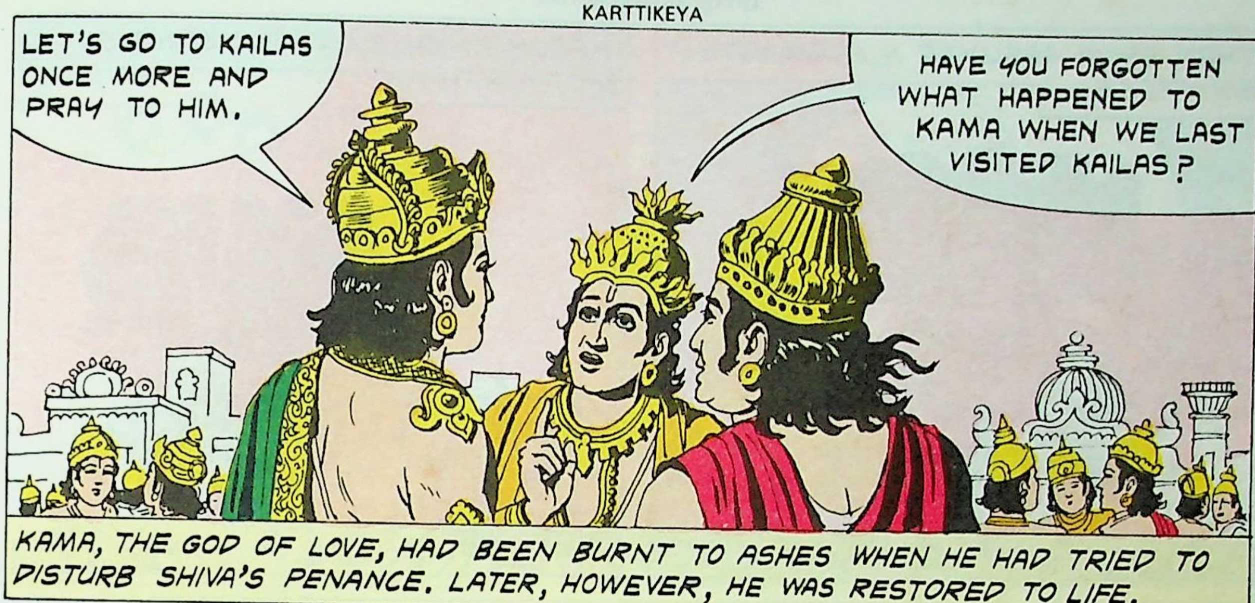

THEN, RAVAGING KINGDOM AFTER KINGDOM ON THEIR ROUTE...

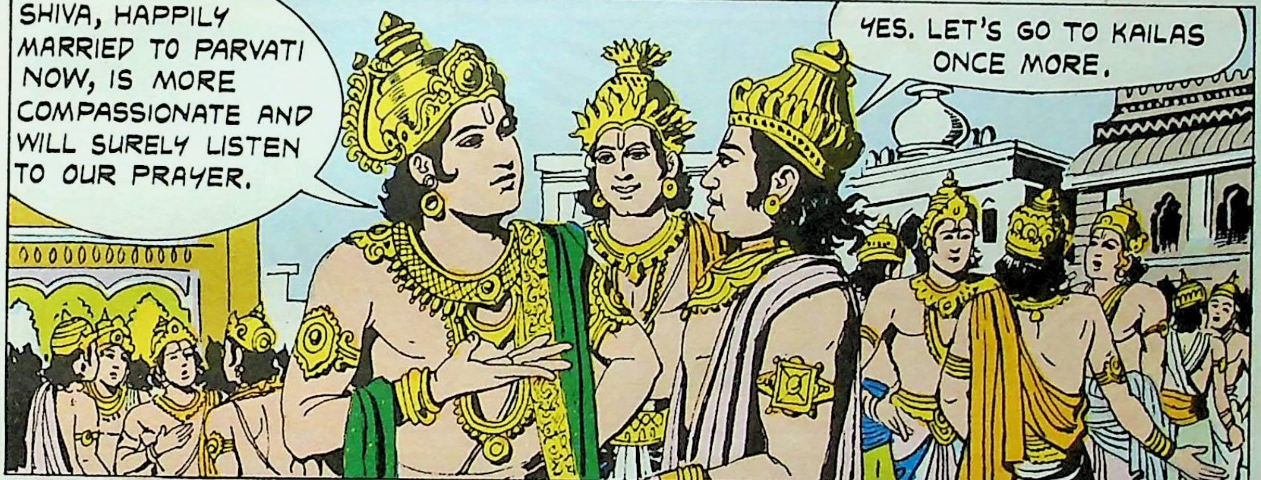

...THEY CAME TO DEVALOKA. THERE, IN THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, THE DEVAS WERE ROUTED...
...AND TAKEN CAPTIVE.
LATER—
HA! HA! HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN BONDAGE, O INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS?
IS THAT VAYU? HOW DEFLATED HE LOOKS!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THEM, BROTHER?
WE'LL MAKE THEM OUR SLAVES. INDRA WILL BE OUR FISHERMAN, AND VAYU OUR SWEEPER. AND...
...SURYA WILL MAKE A FINE BALL FOR OUR CHILDREN.
A BRILLIANT IDEA! HAHAHA!

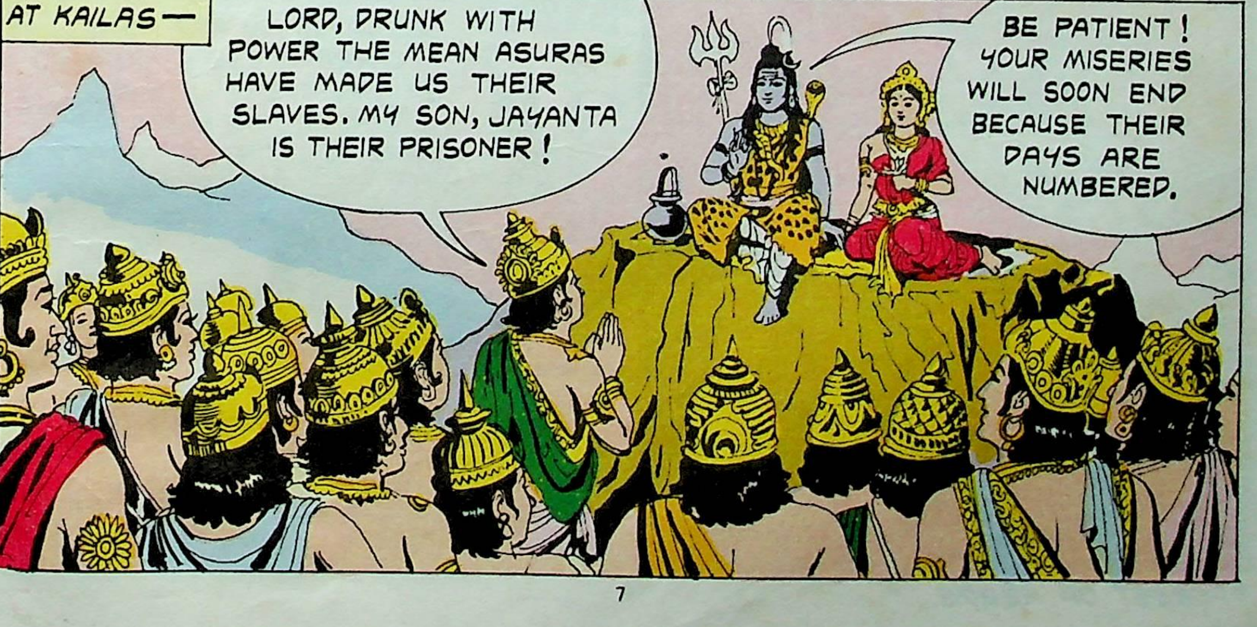

SURAPADMAN HAD A MAGNIFICENT CITY BUILT BY VISHWAKARMA, THE ARCHITECT OF THE DEVAS. HE CALLED IT MAHENDRAPURI AND MADE IT HIS CAPITAL.
THE DEVAS MEANWHILE WERE LAMENTING THEIR FATE.
THEY HAVE IMPRISONED EVEN THE VALIANT JAYANTA*! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
HOW LONG CAN WE SUFFER THIS HUMILIATION?
SHIVA HAD PROMISED TO HELP US.
THAT WAS LONG AGO.

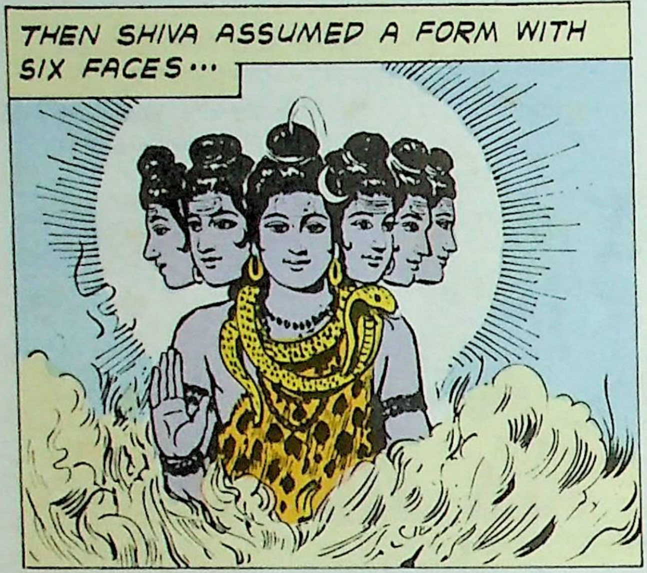
---

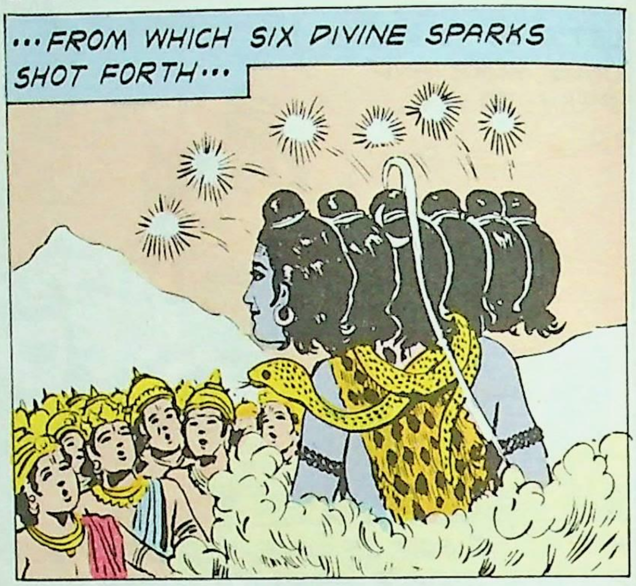
* INDRA'S SON

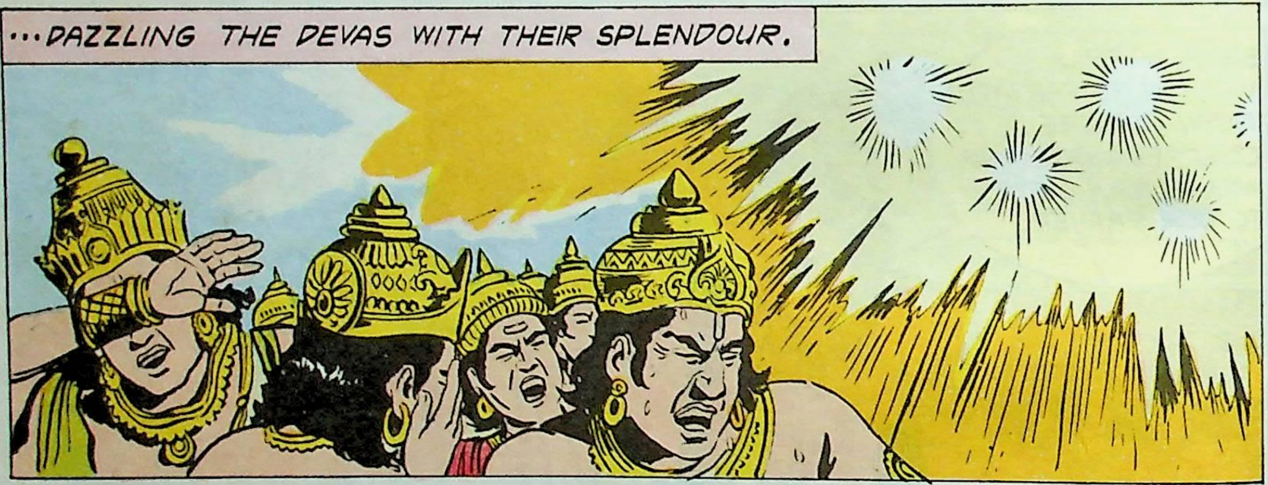

LET'S GO TO KAILAS ONCE MORE AND PRAY TO HIM.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED TO KAMA WHEN WE LAST VISITED KAILAS?
KAMA, THE GOD OF LOVE, HAD BEEN BURNT TO ASHES WHEN HE HAD TRIED TO DISTURB SHIVA'S PENANCE. LATER, HOWEVER, HE WAS RESTORED TO LIFE.

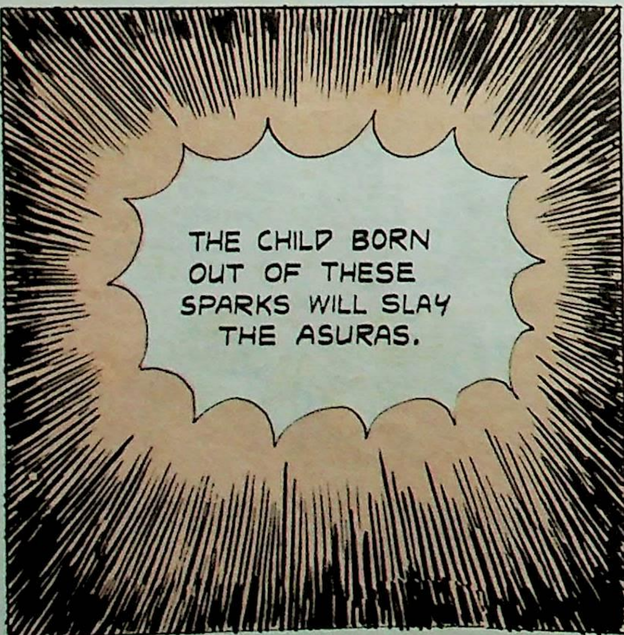

SHIVA, HAPPILY MARRIED TO PARVATI NOW, IS MORE COMPASSIONATE AND WILL SURELY LISTEN TO OUR PRAYER.
YES. LET'S GO TO KAILAS ONCE MORE.

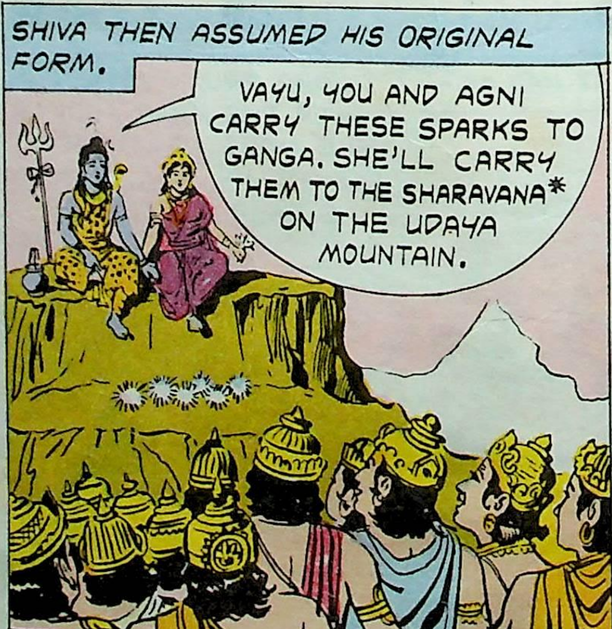

AT KAILAS—
LORD, DRUNK WITH POWER THE MEAN ASURAS HAVE MADE US THEIR SLAVES. MY SON, JAYANTA IS THEIR PRISONER!
BE PATIENT! YOUR MISERIES WILL SOON END BECAUSE THEIR DAYS ARE NUMBERED.


THEN SHIVA ASSUMED A FORM WITH SIX FACES...

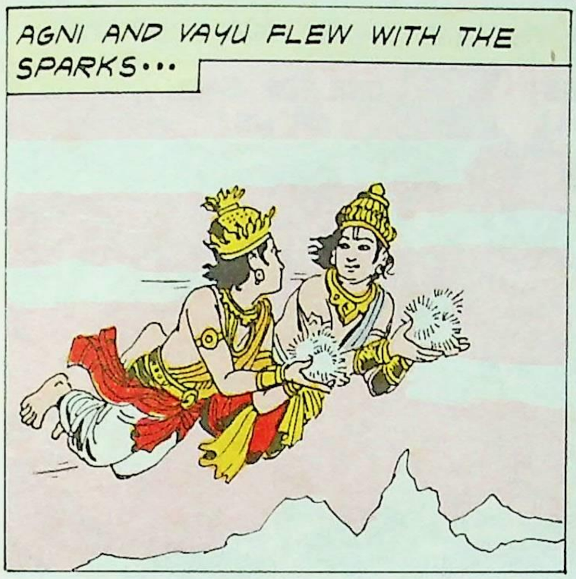

...FROM WHICH SIX DIVINE SPARKS SHOT FORTH...

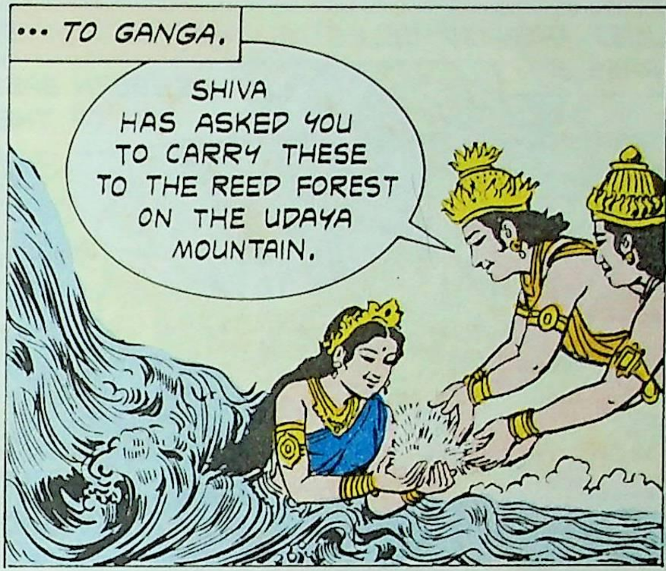

...DAZZLING THE DEVAS WITH THEIR SPLENDOUR.

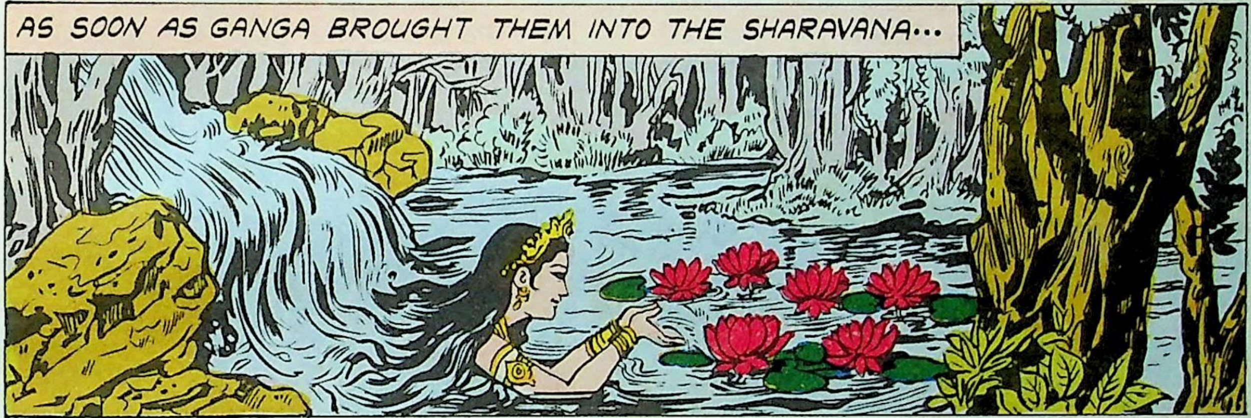

THE CHILD BORN OUT OF THESE SPARKS WILL SLAY THE ASURAS.

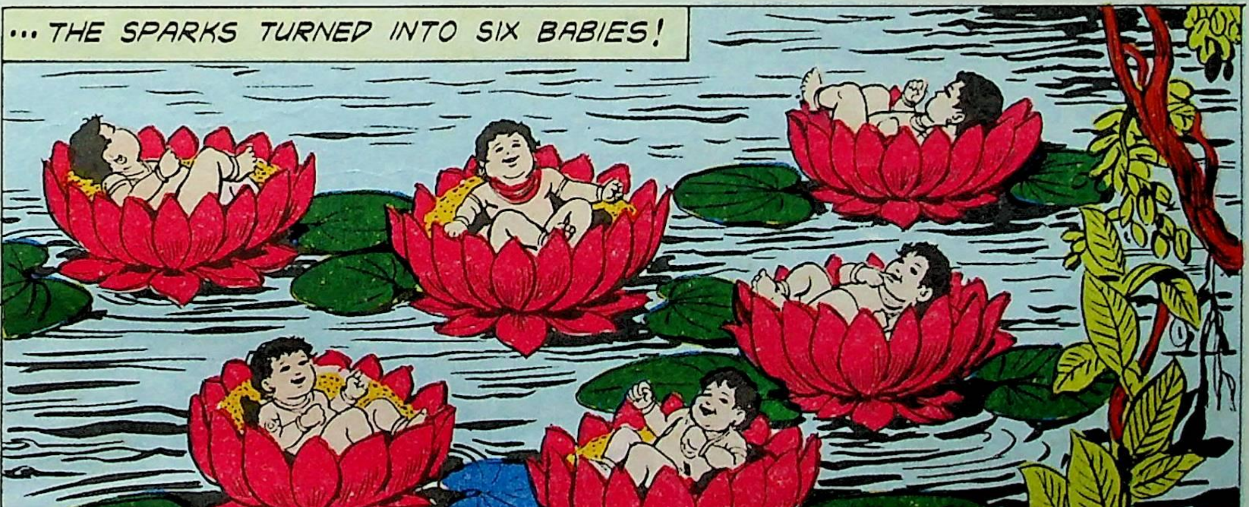

SHIVA THEN ASSUMED HIS ORIGINAL FORM.
VAYU, YOU AND AGNI CARRY THESE SPARKS TO GANGA. SHE'LL CARRY THEM TO THE SHARAVANA* ON THE UDAYA MOUNTAIN.

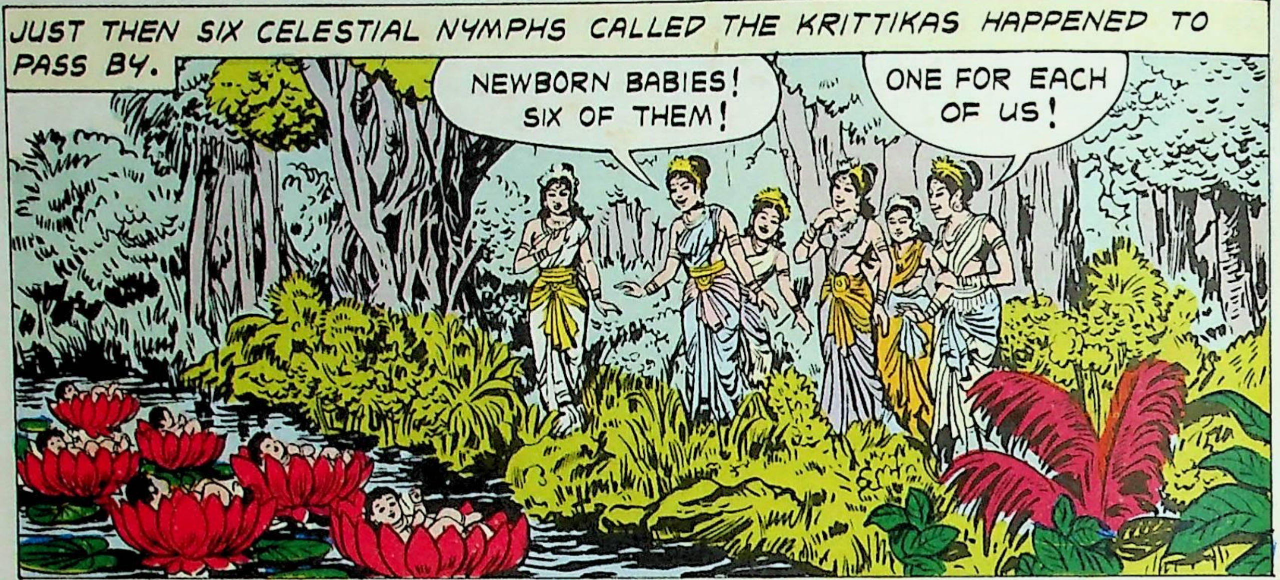
*FOREST OF REEDS


AGNI AND VAYU FLEW WITH THE SPARKS...


... TO GANGA.
SHIVA HAS ASKED YOU TO CARRY THESE TO THE REED FOREST ON THE UDAYA MOUNTAIN.

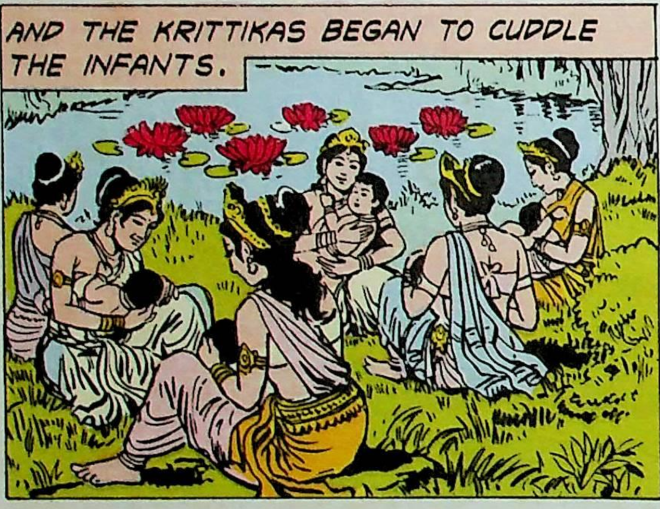

AS SOON AS GANGA BROUGHT THEM INTO THE SHARAVANA...


... THE SPARKS TURNED INTO SIX BABIES!

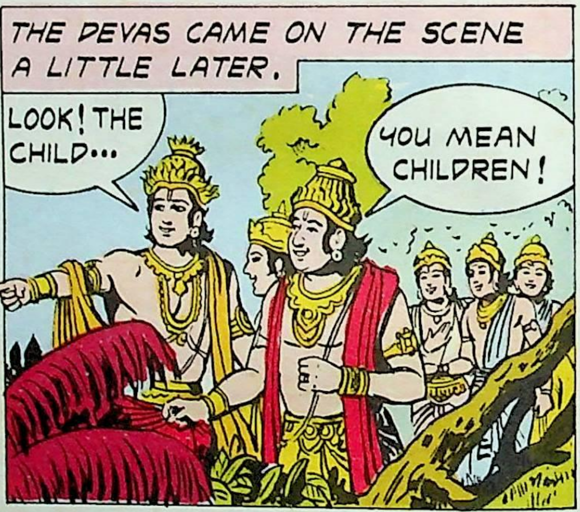


JUST THEN SIX CELESTIAL NYMPHS CALLED THE KRITTIKAS HAPPENED TO PASS BY.

NEWBORN BABIES! SIX OF THEM!
ONE FOR EACH OF US!

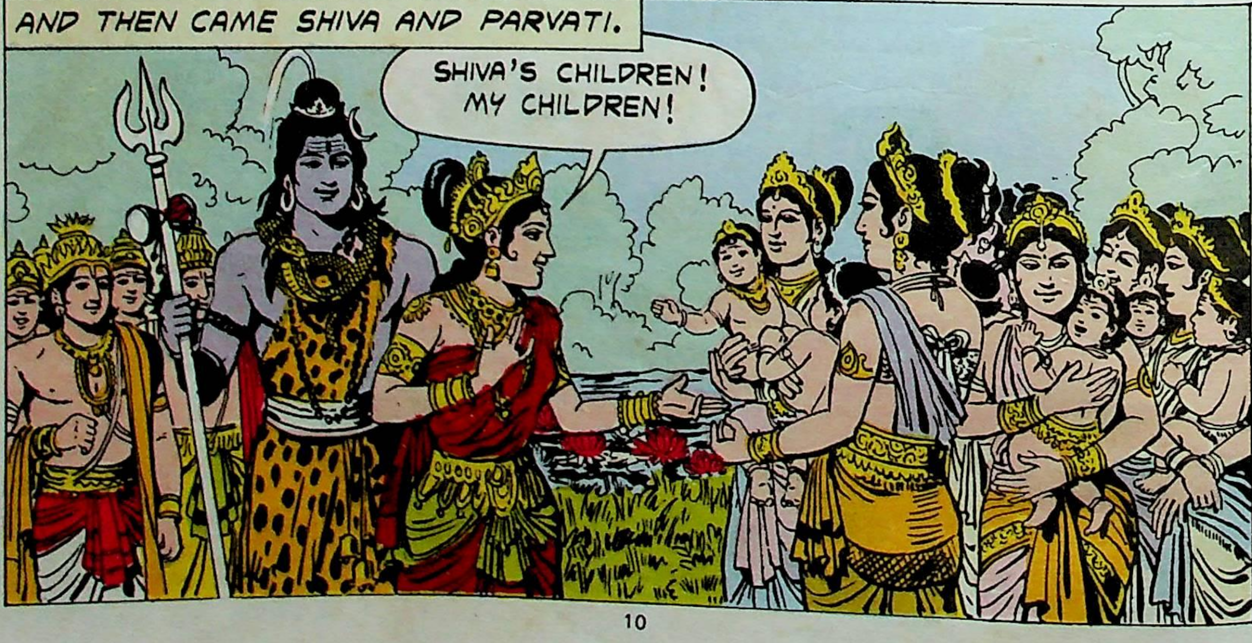


AND THE KRITTIKAS BEGAN TO CUDDLE THE INFANTS.



THE DEVAS CAME ON THE SCENE A LITTLE LATER.

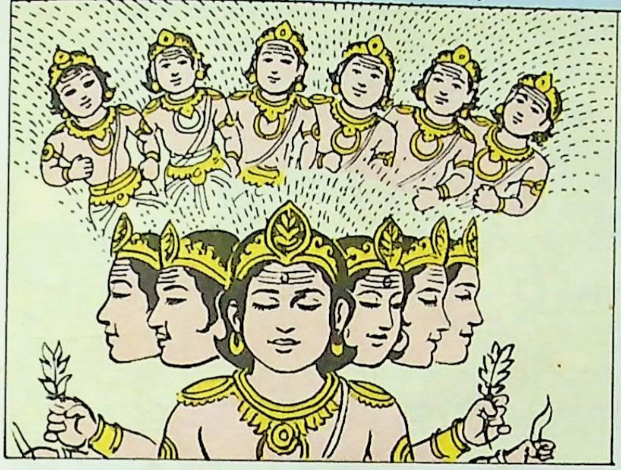
LOOK! THE CHILD...
YOU MEAN CHILDREN!

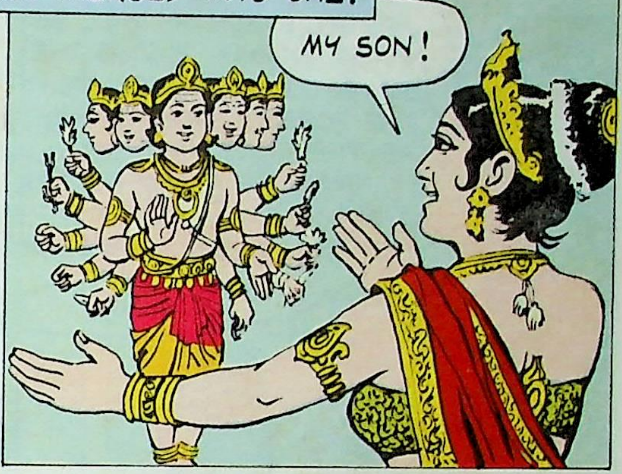


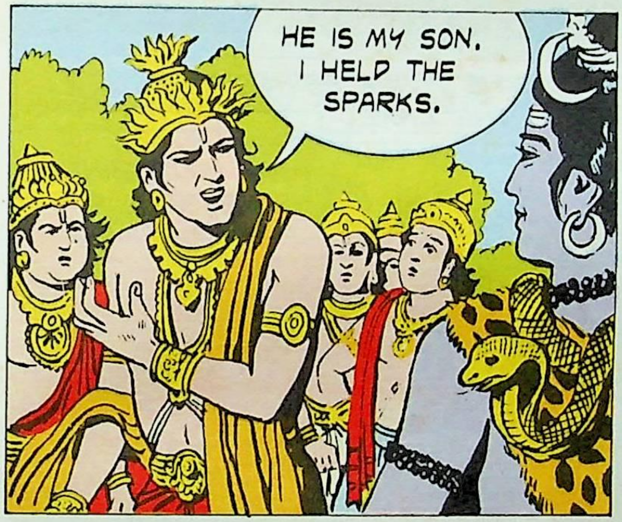
AND THEN CAME SHIVA AND PARVATI.

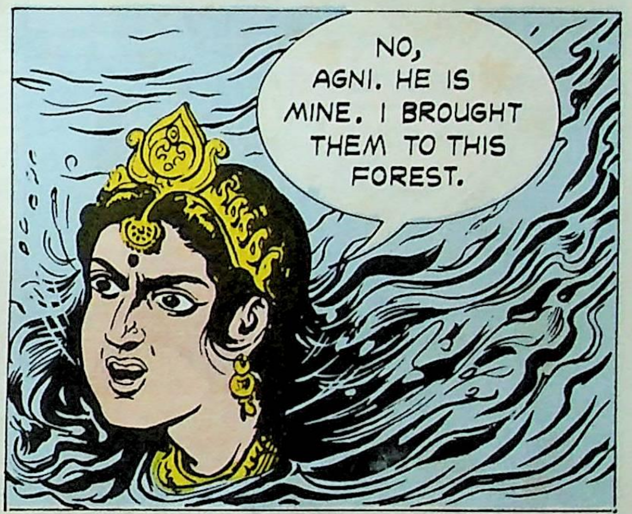
SHIVA'S CHILDREN! MY CHILDREN!

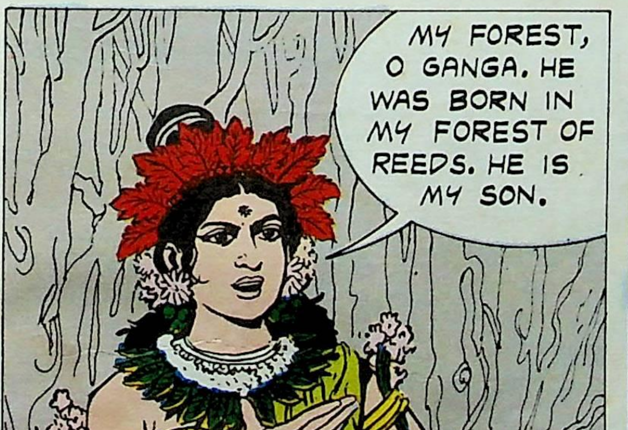
AS PARVATI STEPPED CLOSER, THE BABIES MERGED INTO ONE.

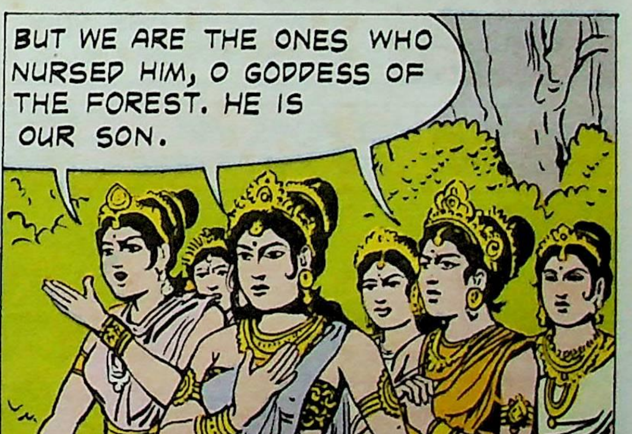


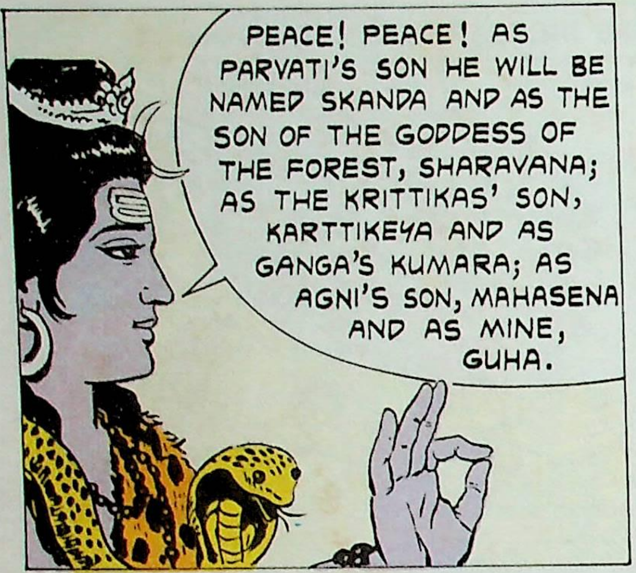


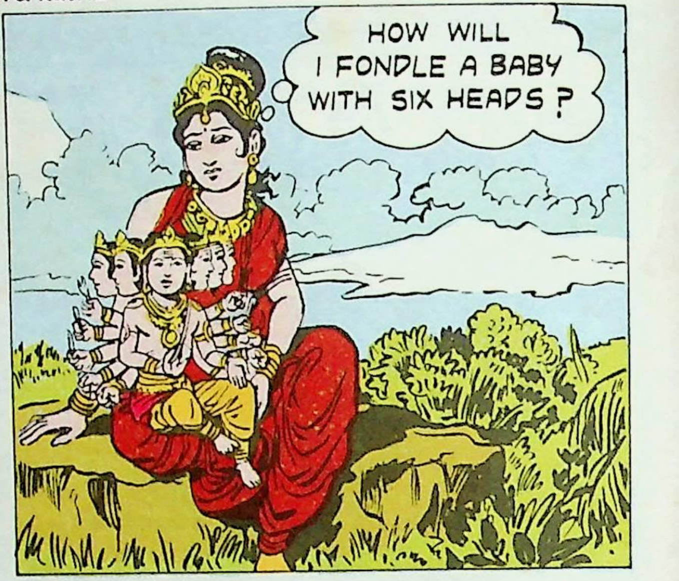

HE IS MY SON. I HELD THE SPARKS.

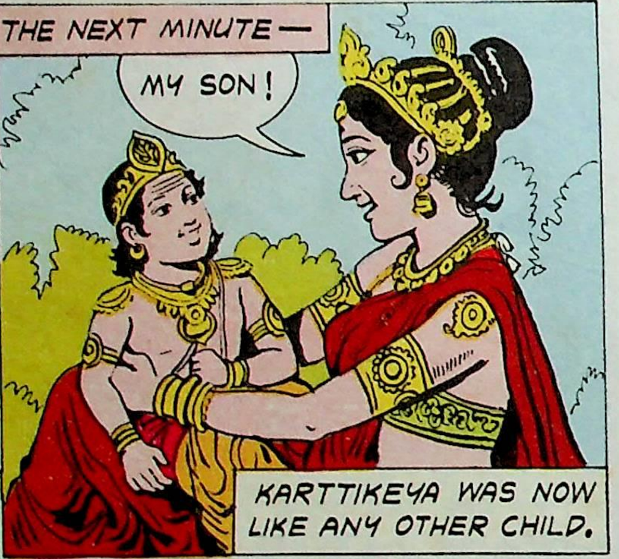

NO, AGNI. HE IS MINE. I BROUGHT THEM TO THIS FOREST.

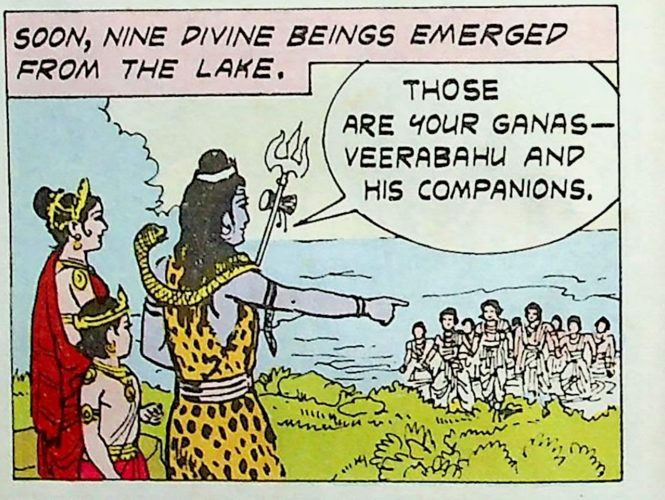

MY FOREST, O GANGA. HE WAS BORN IN MY FOREST OF REEDS. HE IS MY SON.

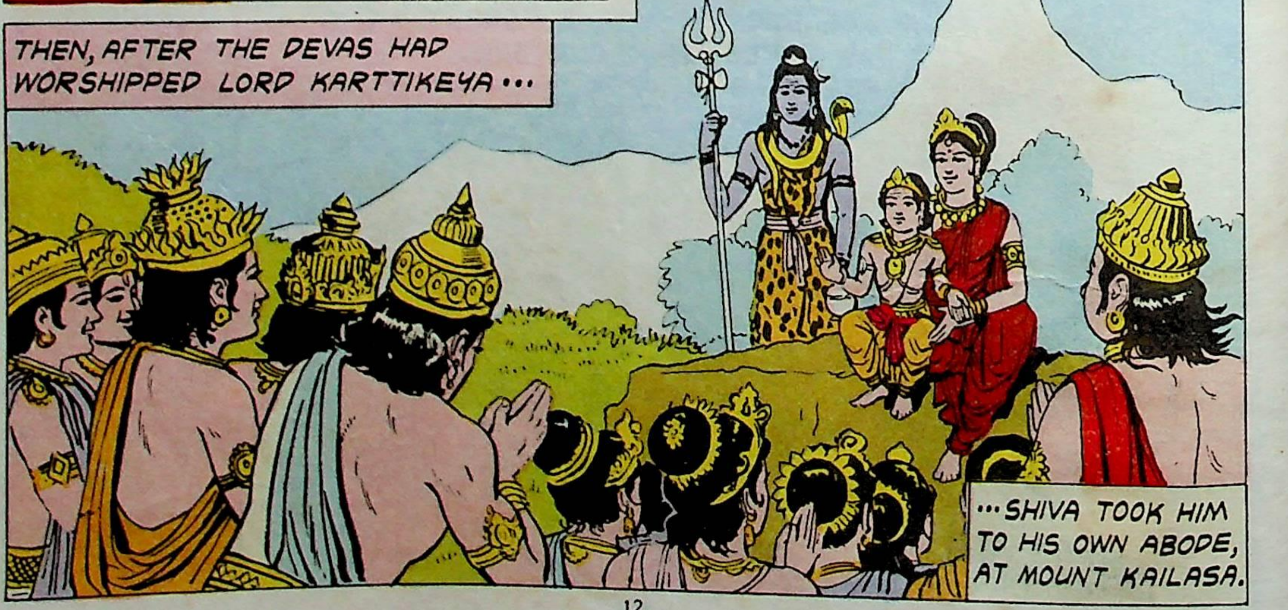

BUT WE ARE THE ONES WHO NURSED HIM, O GODDESS OF THE FOREST. HE IS OUR SON.

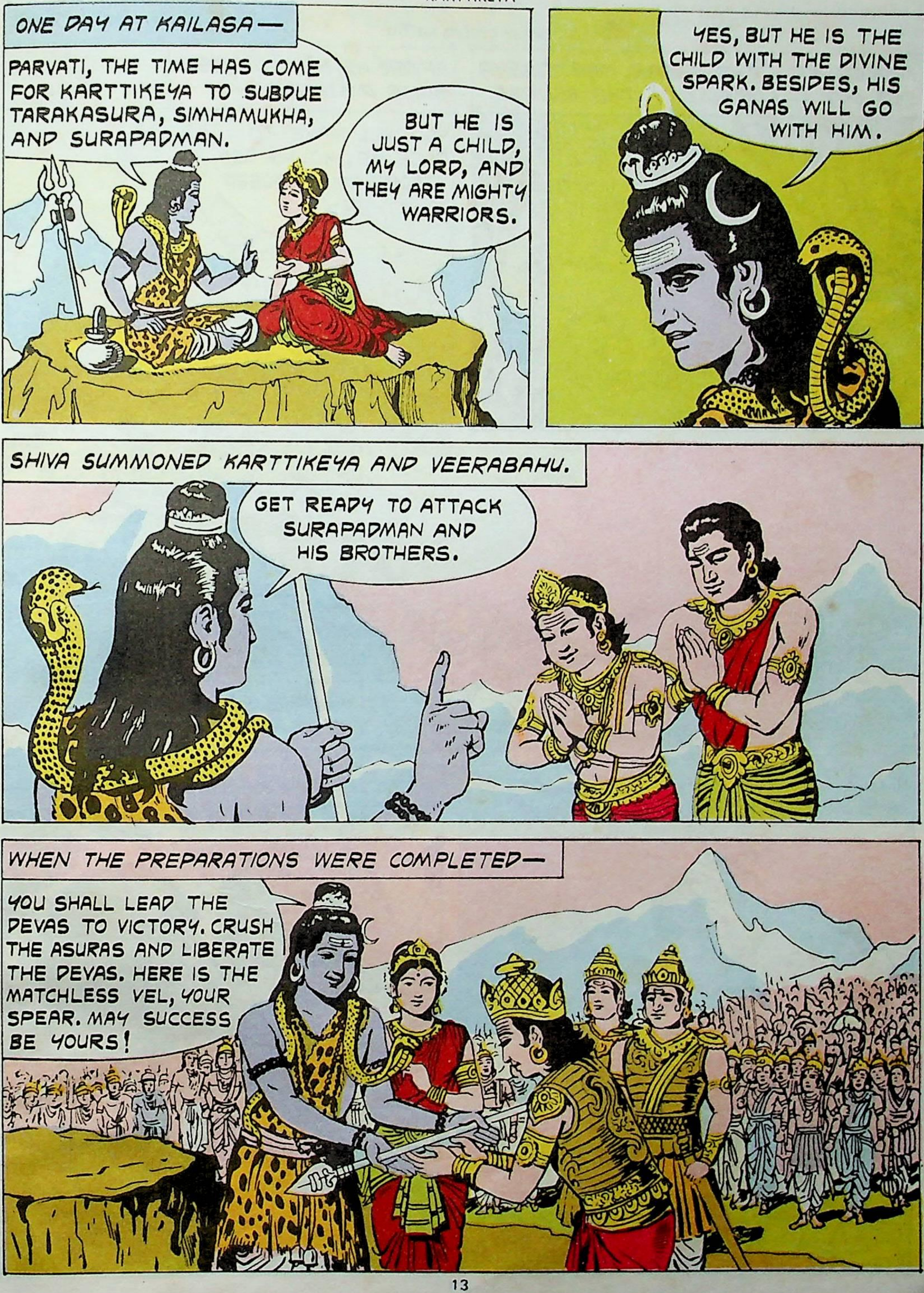

PEACE! PEACE! AS PARVATI'S SON HE WILL BE NAMED SKANDA AND AS THE SON OF THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST, SHARAVANA; AS THE KRITTIKAS' SON, KARTTIKEYA AND AS GANGA'S KUMARA; AS AGNI'S SON, MAHASENA AND AS MINE, GUHA.

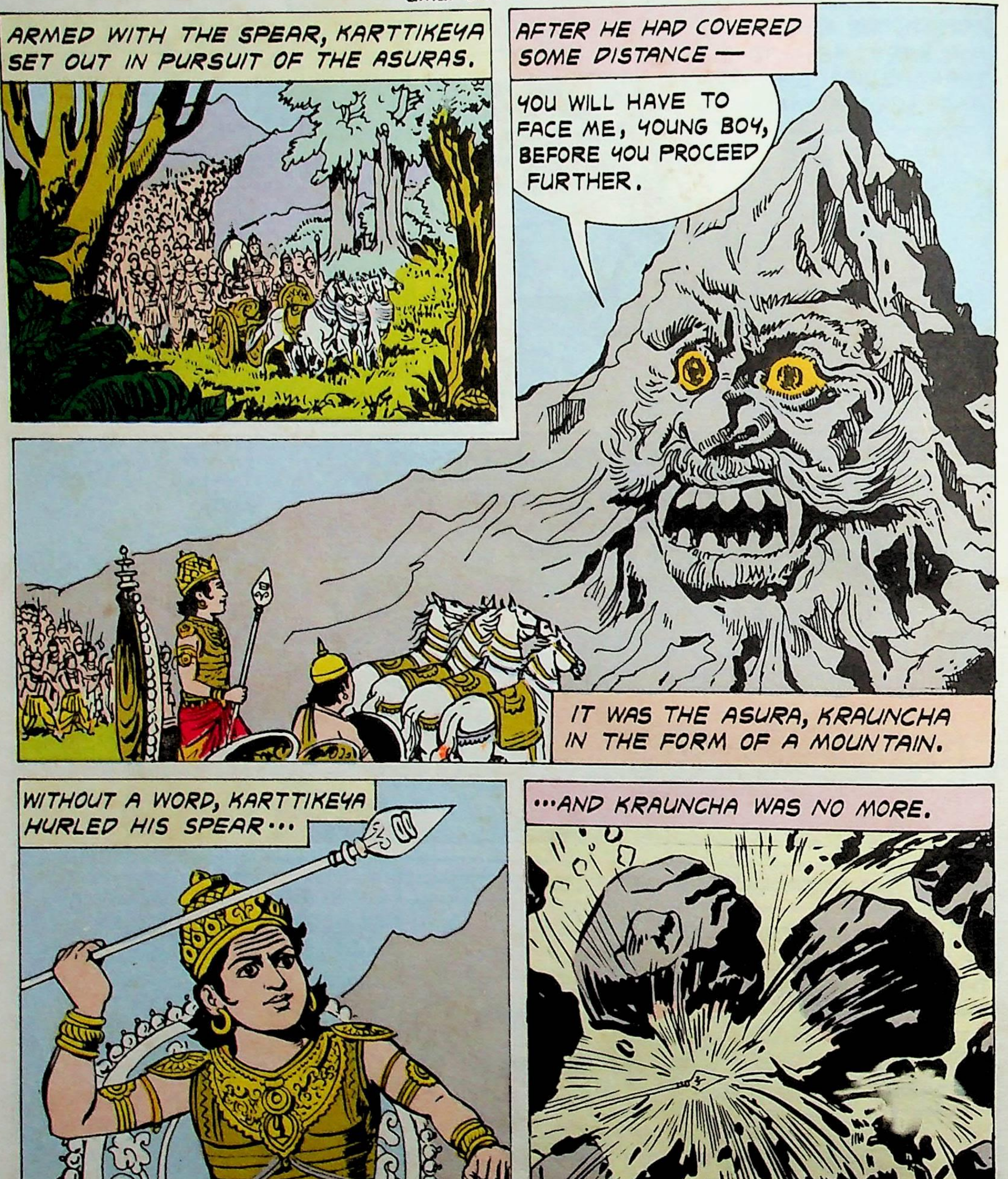

HOW WILL I FONDLE A BABY WITH SIX HEADS?

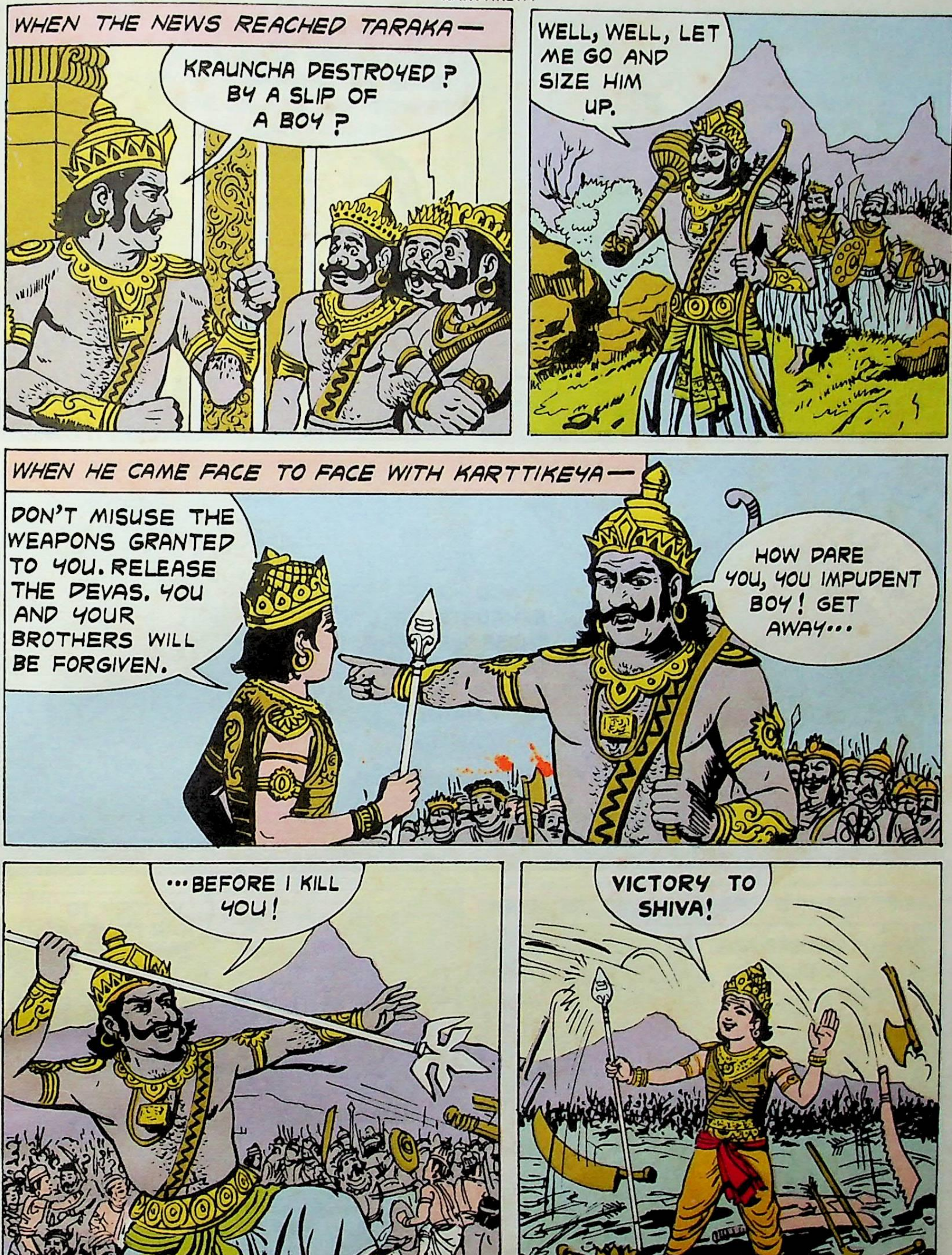

THE NEXT MINUTE—
MY SON!
KARTTIKEYA WAS NOW LIKE ANY OTHER CHILD.

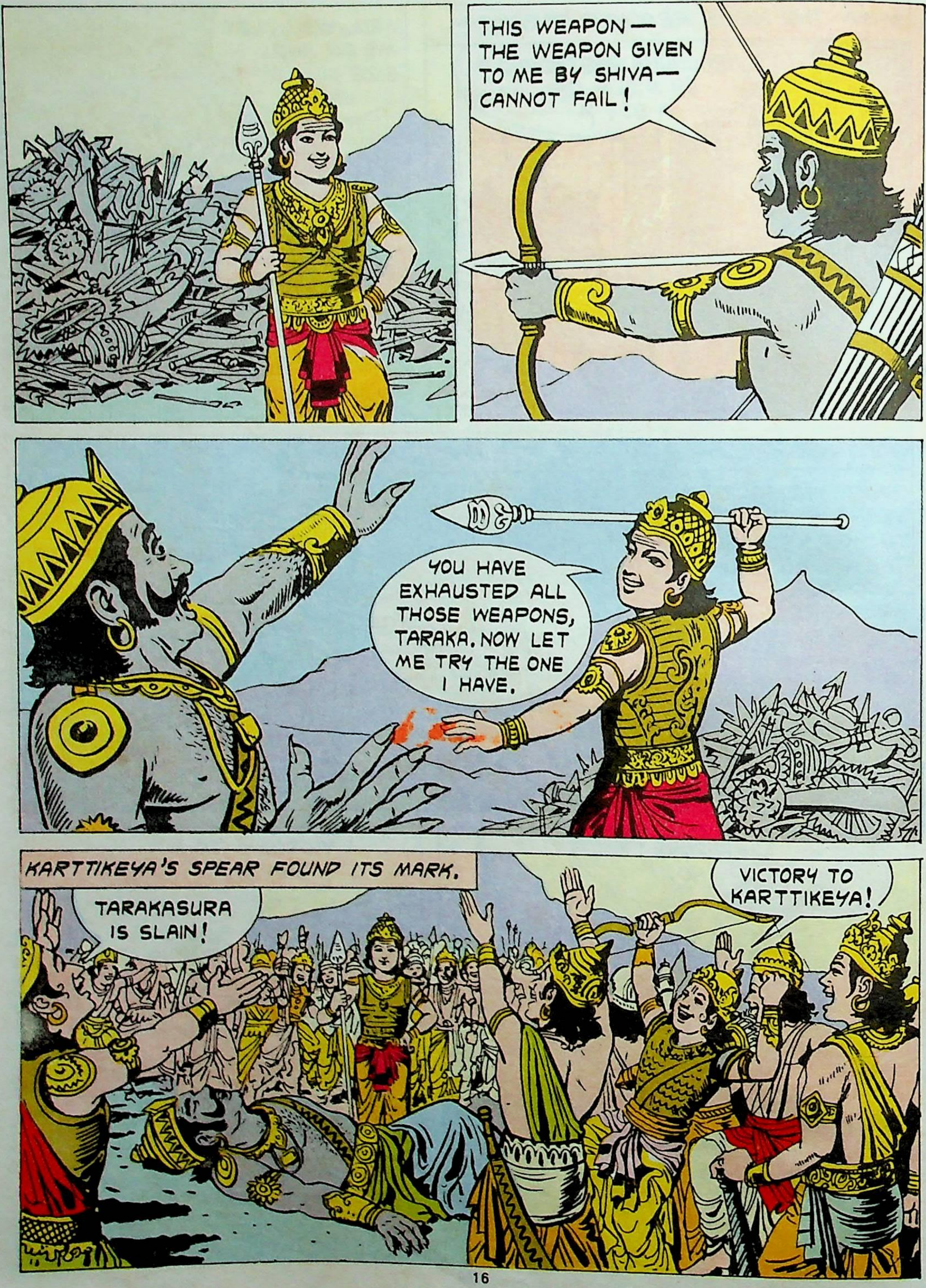

SOON, NINE DIVINE BEINGS EMERGED FROM THE LAKE.
THOSE ARE YOUR GANAS— VEERABAHU AND HIS COMPANIONS.

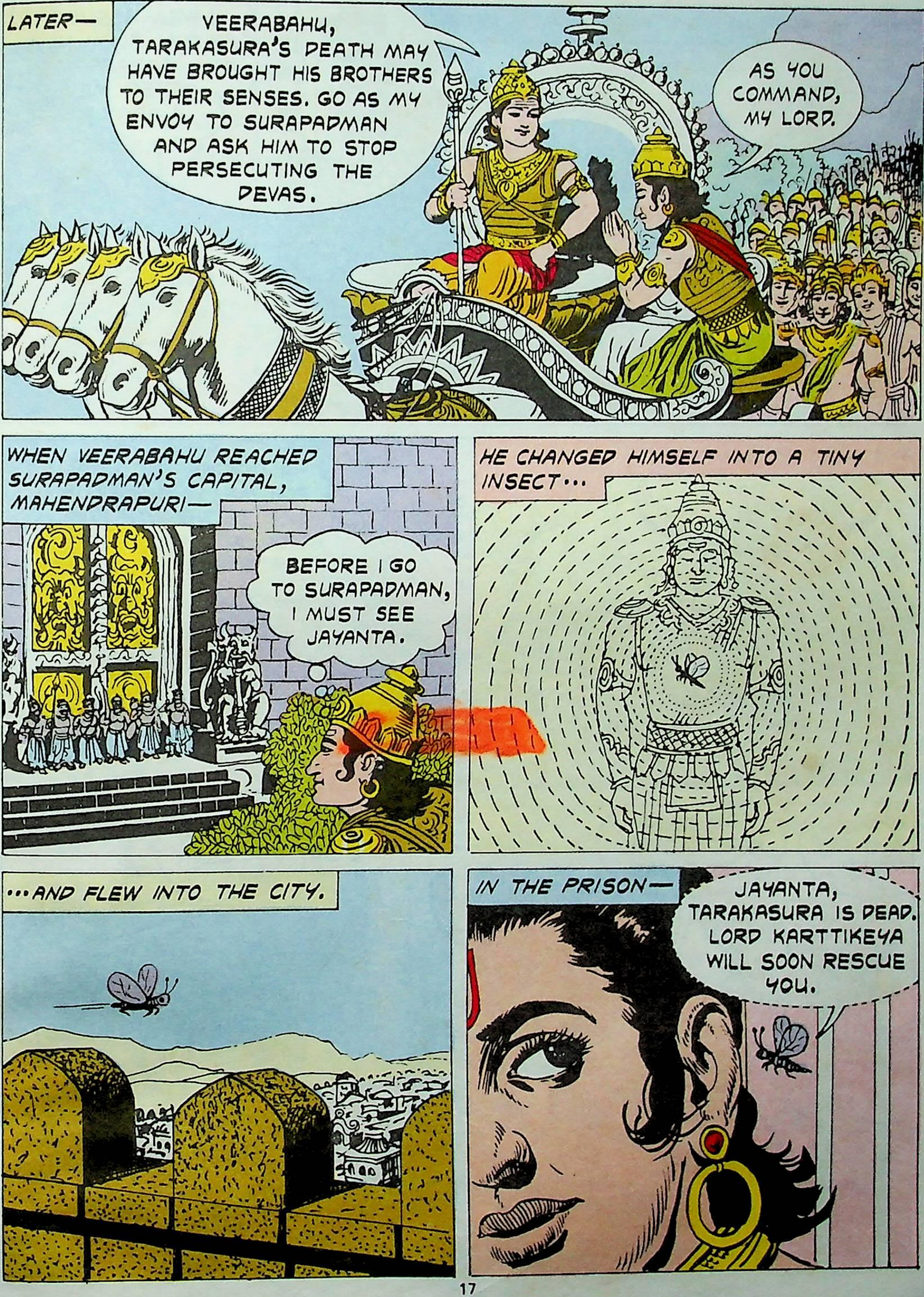

THEN, AFTER THE DEVAS HAD WORSHIPPED LORD KARTTIKEYA...
...SHIVA TOOK HIM TO HIS OWN ABODE, AT MOUNT KAILASA.

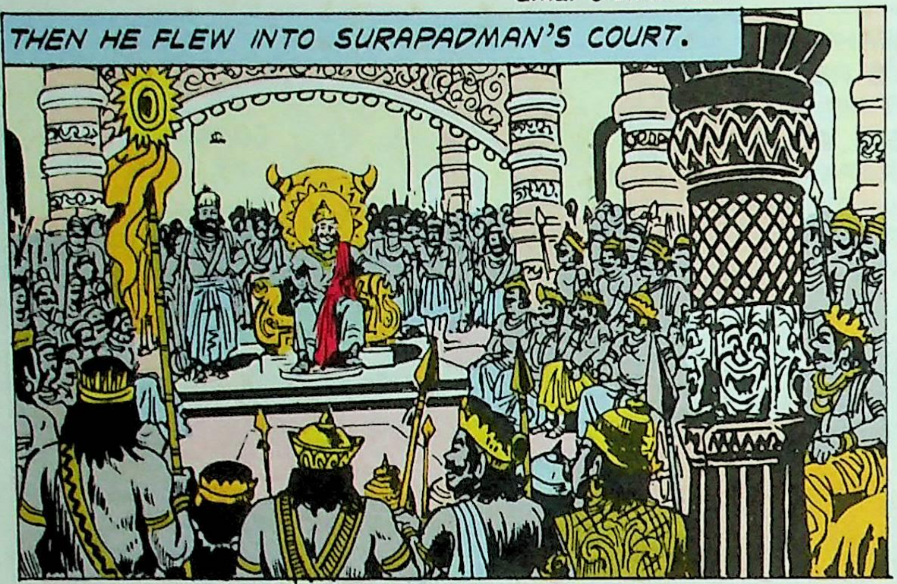

ONE DAY AT KAILASA—
PARVATI, THE TIME HAS COME FOR KARTTIKEYA TO SUBDUE TARAKASURA, SIMHAMUKHA, AND SURAPADMAN.
BUT HE IS JUST A CHILD, MY LORD, AND THEY ARE MIGHTY WARRIORS.
YES, BUT HE IS THE CHILD WITH THE DIVINE SPARK. BESIDES, HIS GANAS WILL GO WITH HIM.
SHIVA SUMMONED KARTTIKEYA AND VEERABAHU.
GET READY TO ATTACK SURAPADMAN AND HIS BROTHERS.
WHEN THE PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETED—
YOU SHALL LEAD THE DEVAS TO VICTORY. CRUSH THE ASURAS AND LIBERATE THE DEVAS. HERE IS THE MATCHLESS VEL, YOUR SPEAR. MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS!

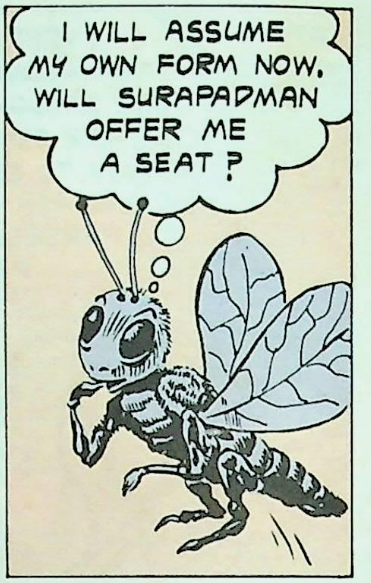

ARMED WITH THE SPEAR, KARTTIKEYA SET OUT IN PURSUIT OF THE ASURAS.
AFTER HE HAD COVERED SOME DISTANCE —
YOU WILL HAVE TO FACE ME, YOUNG BOY, BEFORE YOU PROCEED FURTHER.
IT WAS THE ASURA, KRAUNCHA IN THE FORM OF A MOUNTAIN.
WITHOUT A WORD, KARTTIKEYA HURLED HIS SPEAR…
…AND KRAUNCHA WAS NO MORE.

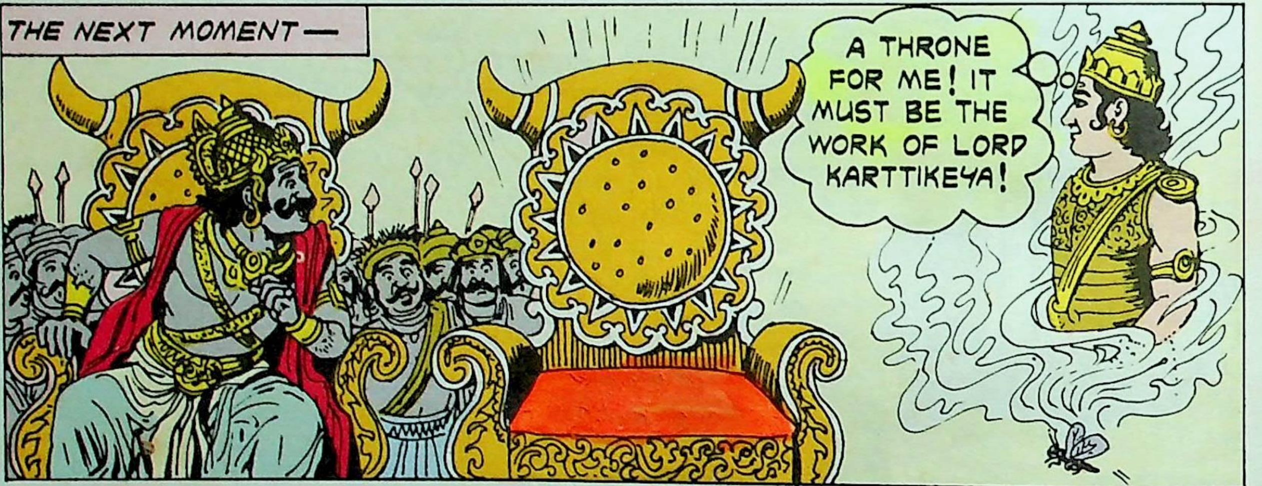

WHEN THE NEWS REACHED TARAKA—
KRAUNCHA DESTROYED ? BY A SLIP OF A BOY ?
WELL, WELL, LET ME GO AND SIZE HIM UP.
WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARTTIKEYA—
DON'T MISUSE THE WEAPONS GRANTED TO YOU. RELEASE THE DEVAS. YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS WILL BE FORGIVEN.
HOW DARE YOU, YOU IMPUDENT BOY ! GET AWAY...
...BEFORE I KILL YOU !
VICTORY TO SHIVA !

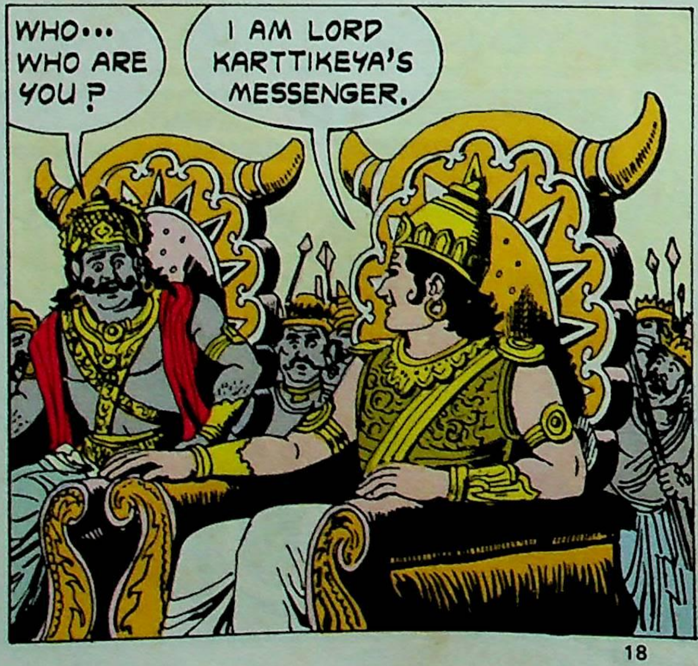

THIS WEAPON— THE WEAPON GIVEN TO ME BY SHIVA— CANNOT FAIL!
YOU HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL THOSE WEAPONS, TARAKA. NOW LET ME TRY THE ONE I HAVE.
KARTTIKEYA'S SPEAR FOUND ITS MARK.
TARAKASURA IS SLAIN!
VICTORY TO KARTTIKEYA!

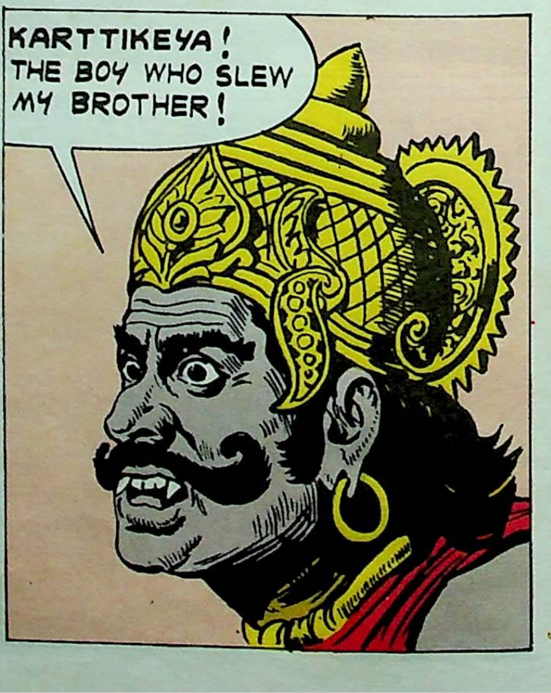

LATER—
VEERABAHU, TARAKASURA'S DEATH MAY HAVE BROUGHT HIS BROTHERS TO THEIR SENSES. GO AS MY ENVOY TO SURAPADMAN AND ASK HIM TO STOP PERSECUTING THE DEVAS.
AS YOU COMMAND, MY LORD.
WHEN VEERABAHU REACHED SURAPADMAN'S CAPITAL, MAHENDRAPURI—
BEFORE I GO TO SURAPADMAN, I MUST SEE JAYANTA.
HE CHANGED HIMSELF INTO A TINY INSECT...
...AND FLEW INTO THE CITY.
IN THE PRISON—
JAYANTA, TARAKASURA IS DEAD. LORD KARTTIKEYA WILL SOON RESCUE YOU.

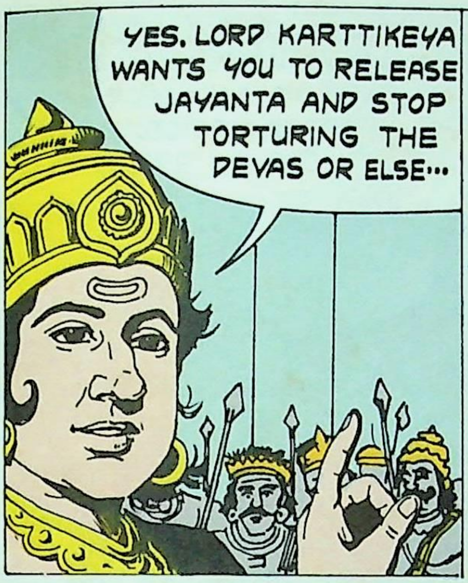

THEN HE FLEW INTO SURAPADMAN'S COURT.

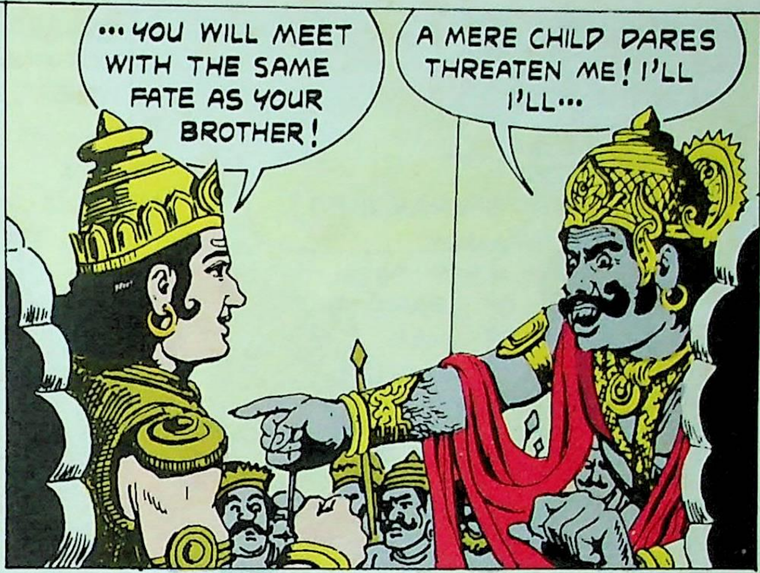

I WILL ASSUME MY OWN FORM NOW. WILL SURAPADMAN OFFER ME A SEAT ?

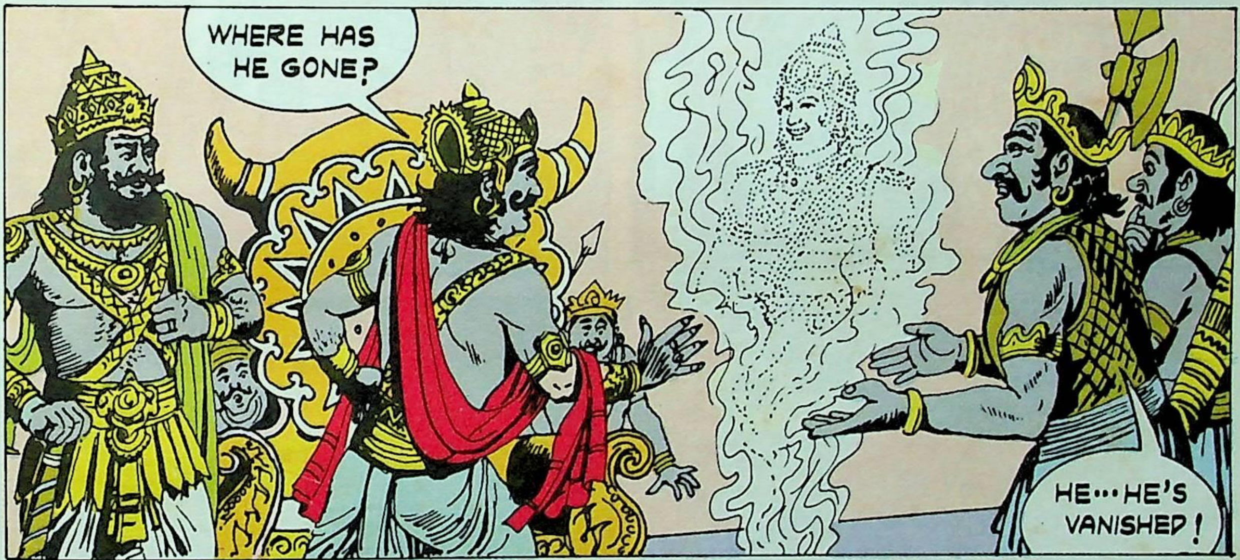

THE NEXT MOMENT—
A THRONE FOR ME! IT MUST BE THE WORK OF LORD KARTTIKEYA!

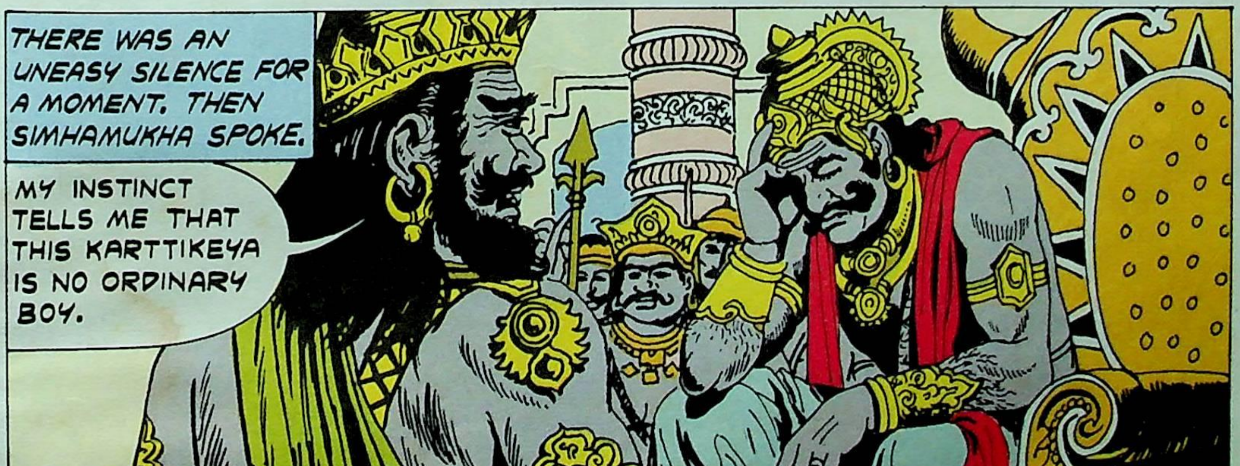

WHO... WHO ARE YOU ?
I AM LORD KARTTIKEYA'S MESSENGER.

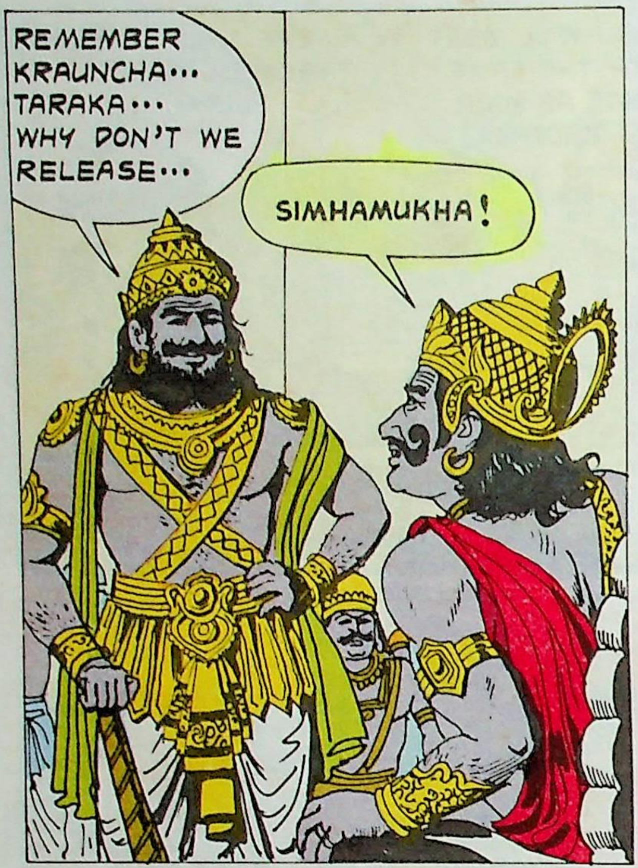

KARTTIKEYA! THE BOY WHO SLEW MY BROTHER!

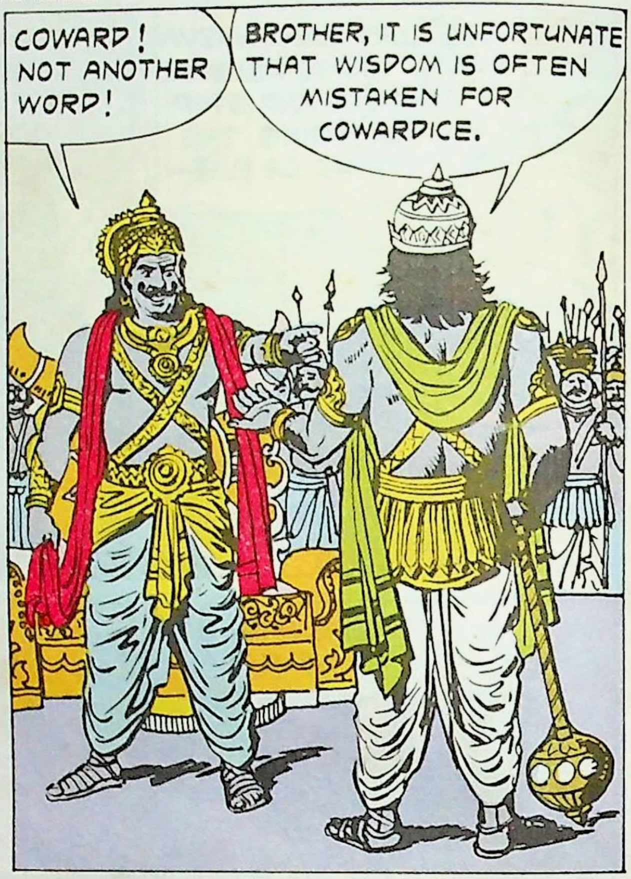

YES. LORD KARTTIKEYA WANTS YOU TO RELEASE JAYANTA AND STOP TORTURING THE DEVAS OR ELSE...

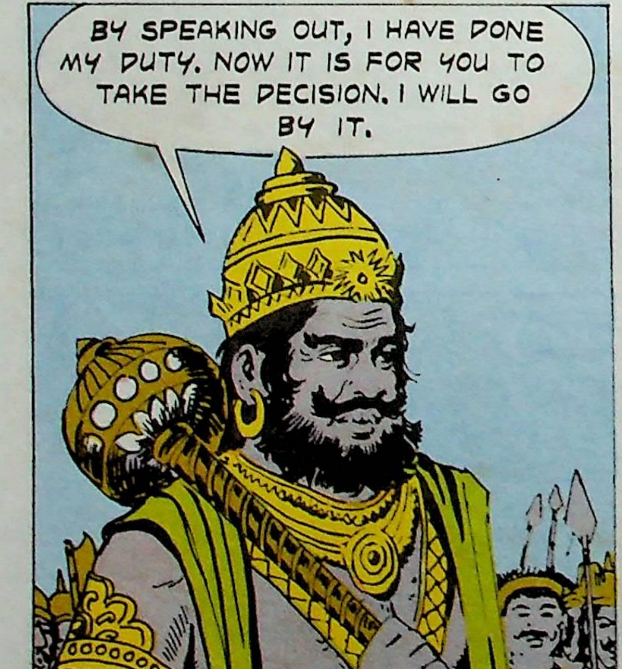

...YOU WILL MEET WITH THE SAME FATE AS YOUR BROTHER!
A MERE CHILD DARES THREATEN ME! I'LL I'LL...

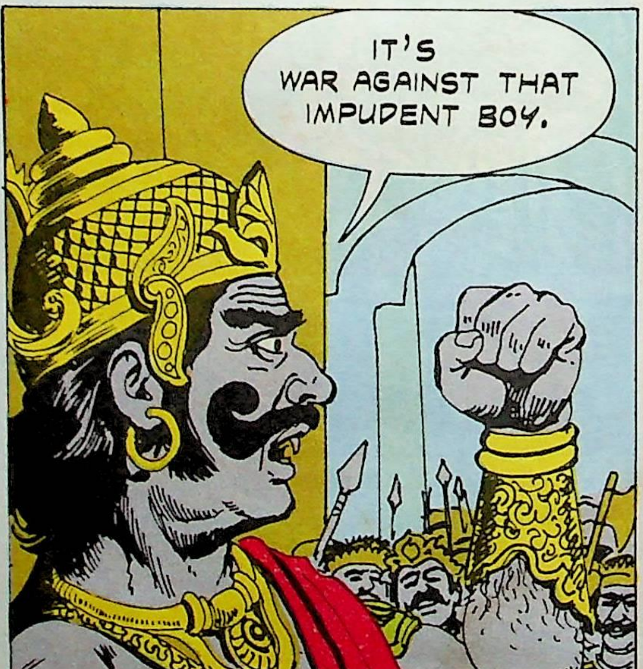

WHERE HAS HE GONE?
HE... HE'S VANISHED!

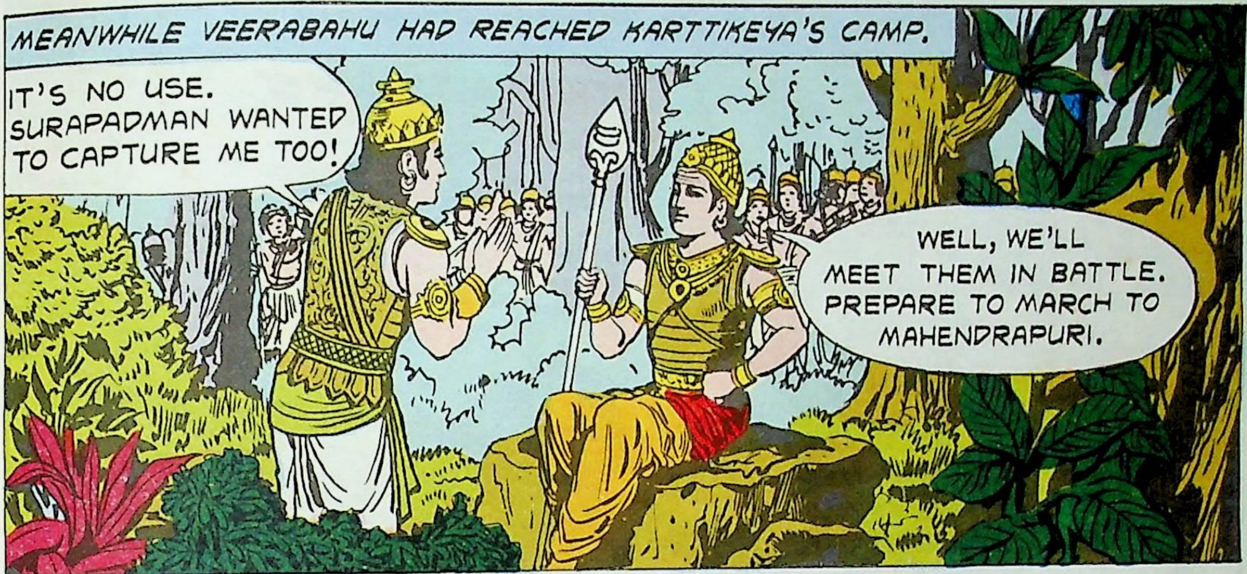

THERE WAS AN UNEASY SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN SIMHAMUKHA SPOKE.
MY INSTINCT TELLS ME THAT THIS KARTTIKEYA IS NO ORDINARY BOY.


REMEMBER KRAUNCHA... TARAKA... WHY DON'T WE RELEASE...
SIMHAMUKHA!

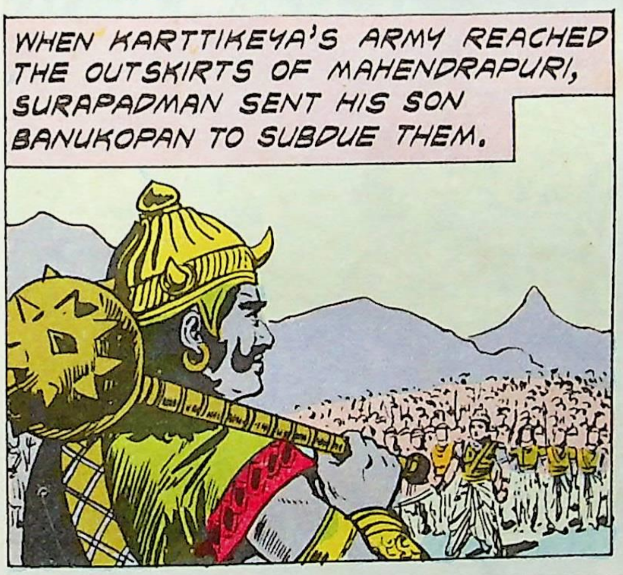

COWARD! NOT ANOTHER WORD!
BROTHER, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT WISDOM IS OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR COWARDICE.

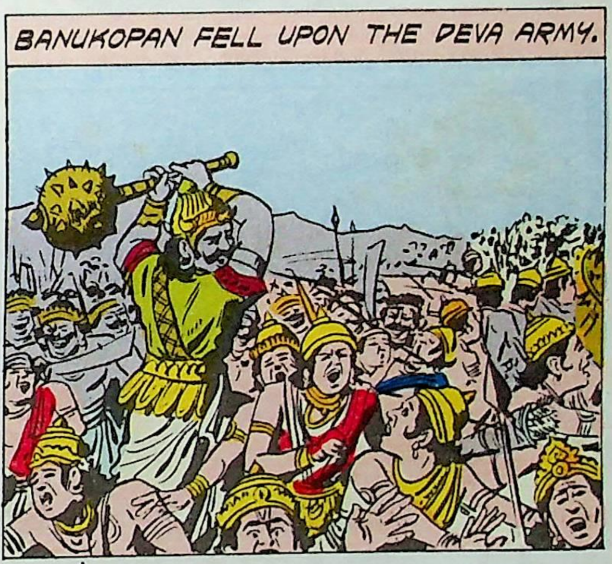

BY SPEAKING OUT, I HAVE DONE MY DUTY. NOW IT IS FOR YOU TO TAKE THE DECISION. I WILL GO BY IT.

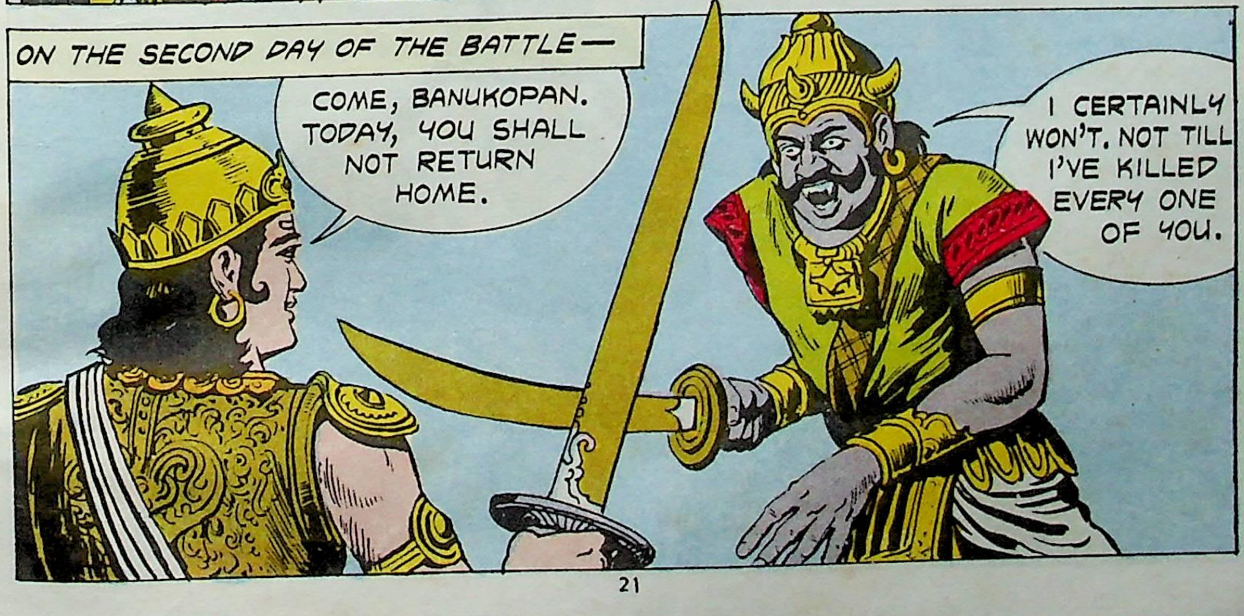

IT'S WAR AGAINST THAT IMPUDENT BOY.


MEANWHILE VEERABAHU HAD REACHED KARTTIKEYA'S CAMP.

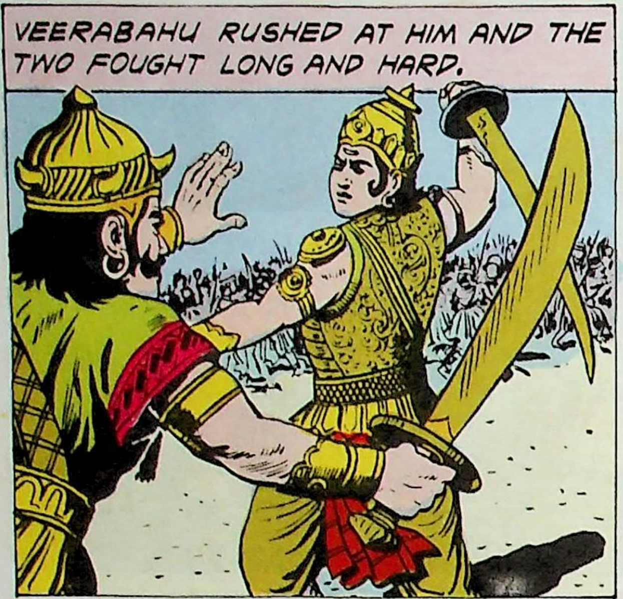
IT'S NO USE. SURAPADMAN WANTED TO CAPTURE ME TOO!
WELL, WE'LL MEET THEM IN BATTLE. PREPARE TO MARCH TO MAHENDRAPURI.

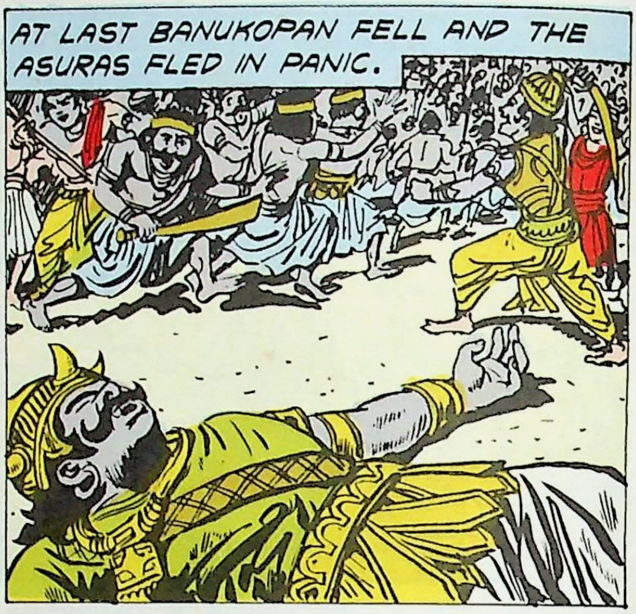

WHEN KARTTIKEYA'S ARMY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF MAHENDRAPURI, SURAPADMAN SENT HIS SON BANUKOPAN TO SUBDUE THEM.

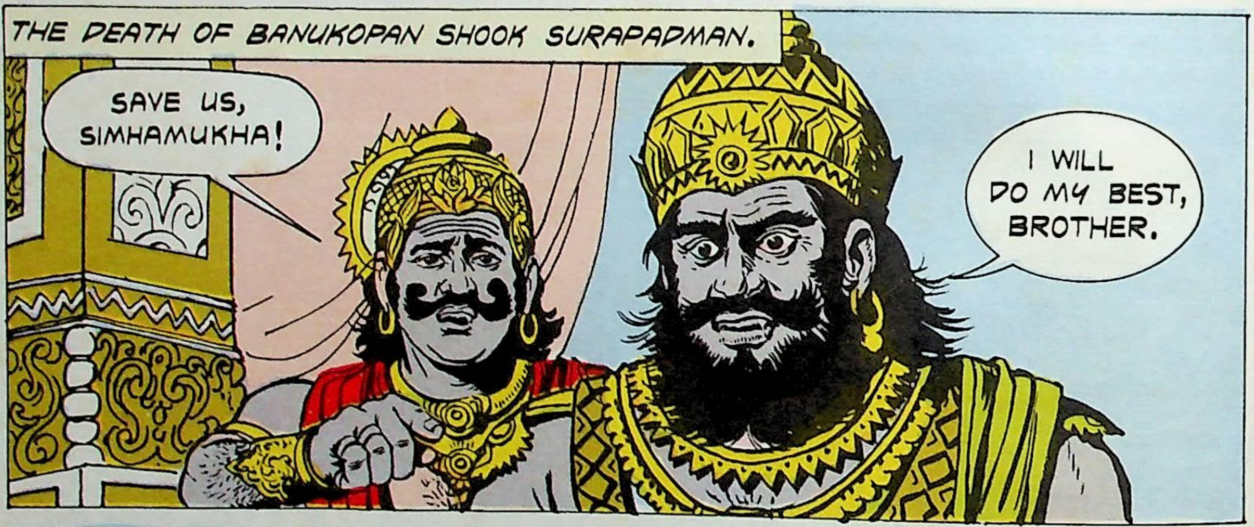

BANUKOPAN FELL UPON THE DEVA ARMY.

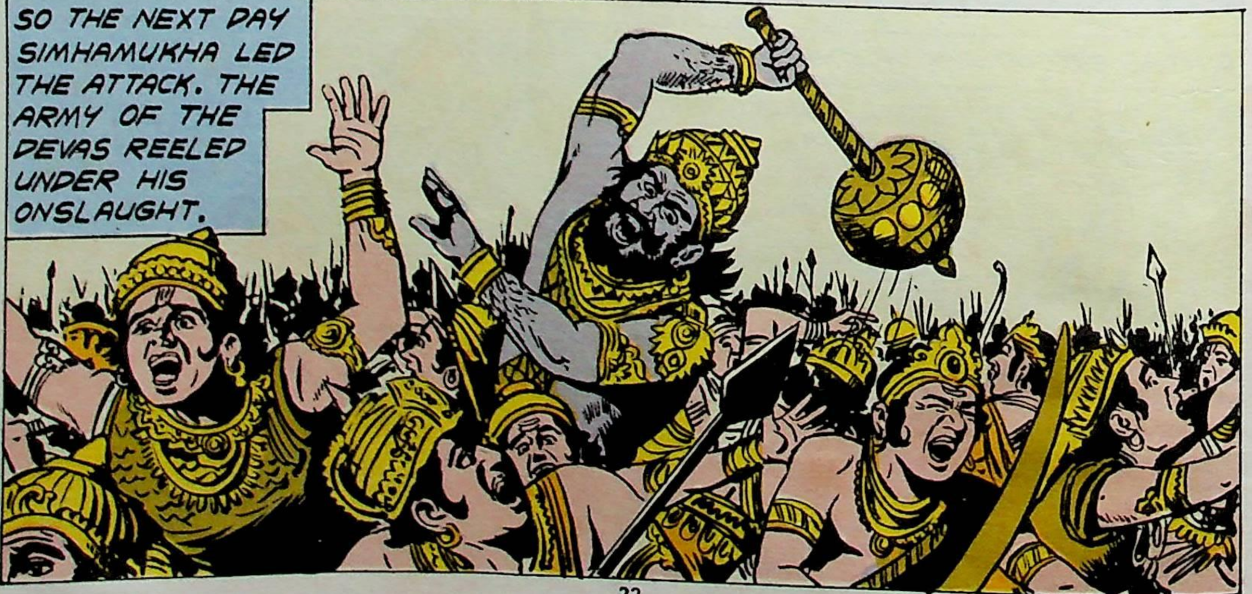

ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE BATTLE—

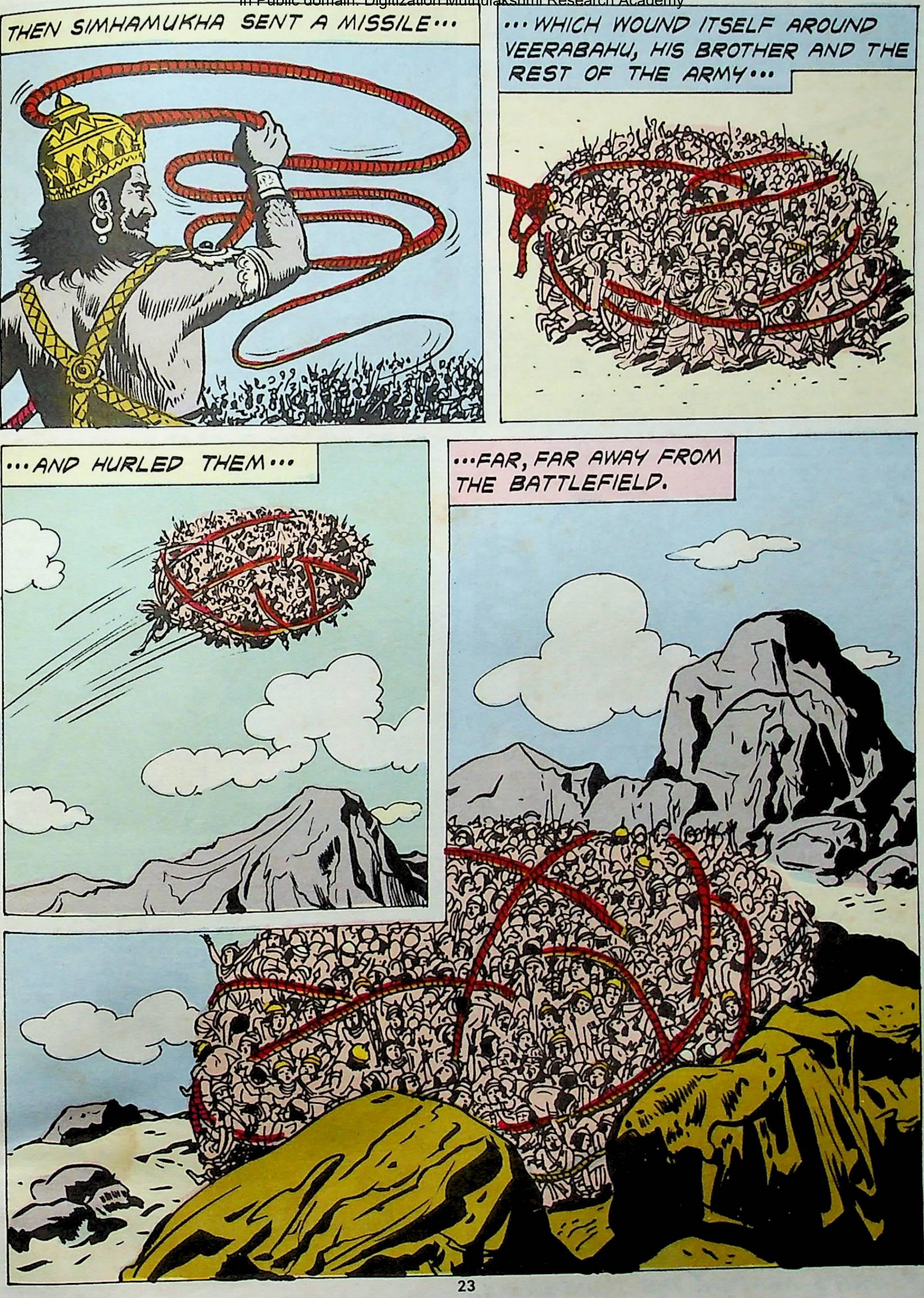
COME, BANUKOPAN. TODAY, YOU SHALL NOT RETURN HOME.
I CERTAINLY WON'T. NOT TILL I'VE KILLED EVERY ONE OF YOU.

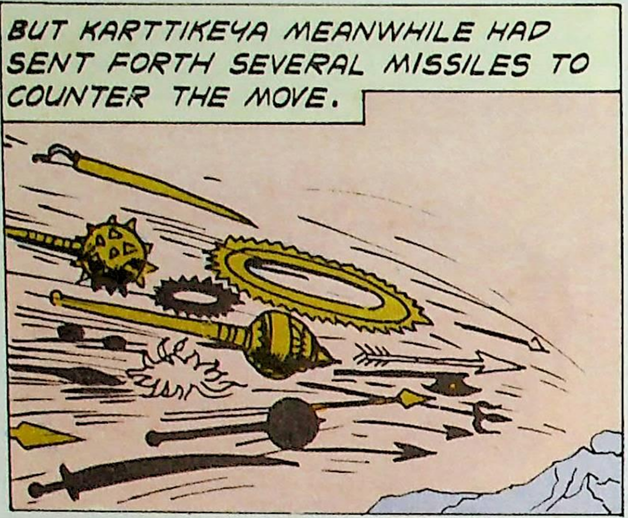

VEERABAHU RUSHED AT HIM AND THE TWO FOUGHT LONG AND HARD.

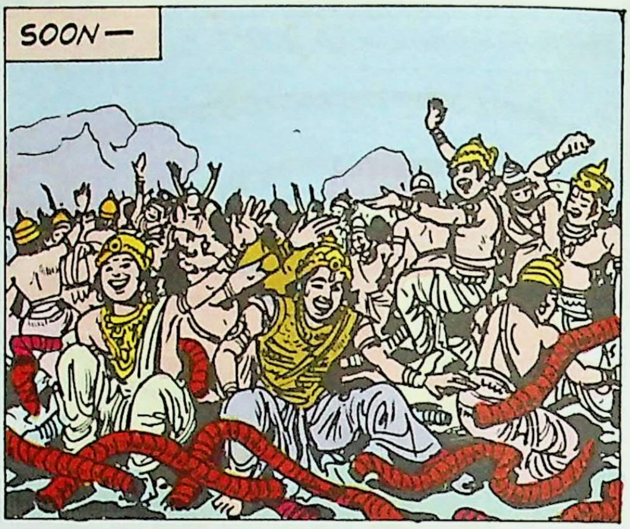

AT LAST BANUKOPAN FELL AND THE ASURAS FLED IN PANIC.

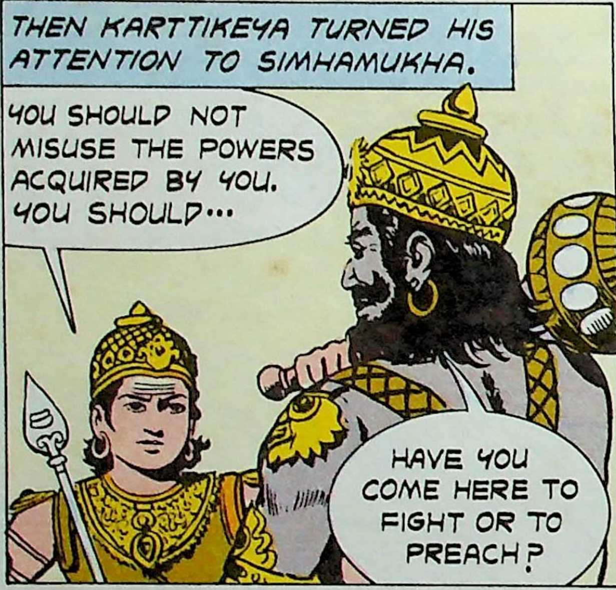

THE DEATH OF BANUKOPAN SHOOK SURAPADMAN.
SAVE US, SIMHAMUKHA!
I WILL DO MY BEST, BROTHER.

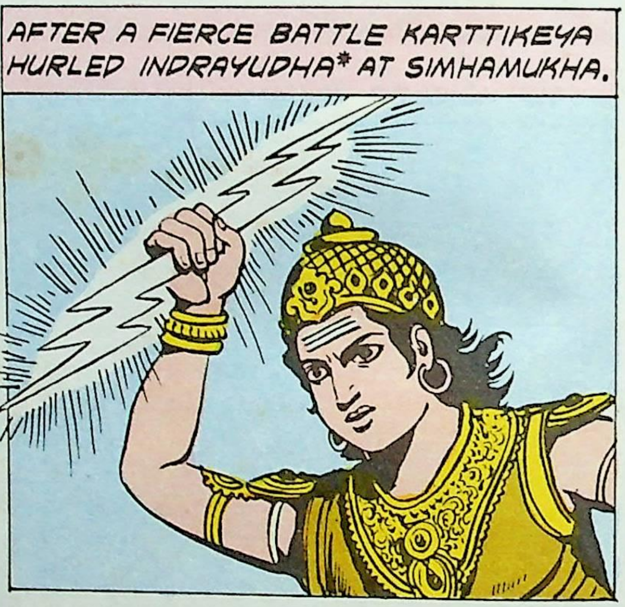

SO THE NEXT DAY SIMHAMUKHA LED THE ATTACK. THE ARMY OF THE DEVAS REELED UNDER HIS ONSLAUGHT.

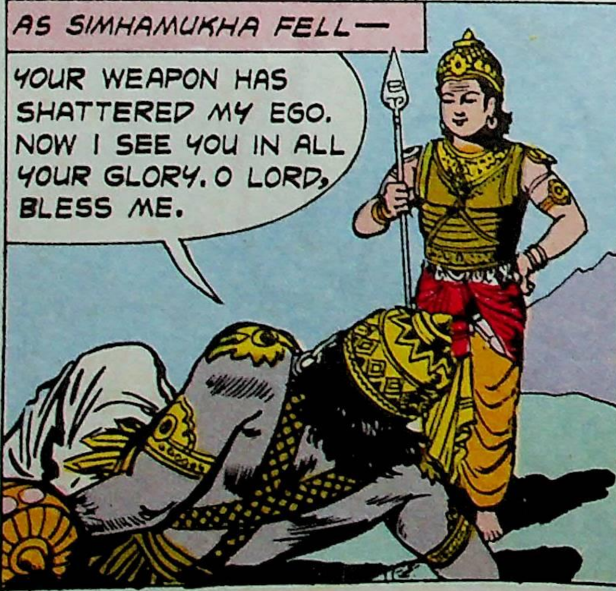

THEN SIMHAMUKHA SENT A MISSILE...
...WHICH WOUND ITSELF AROUND VEERABAHU, HIS BROTHER AND THE REST OF THE ARMY...
...AND HURLED THEM...
...FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.

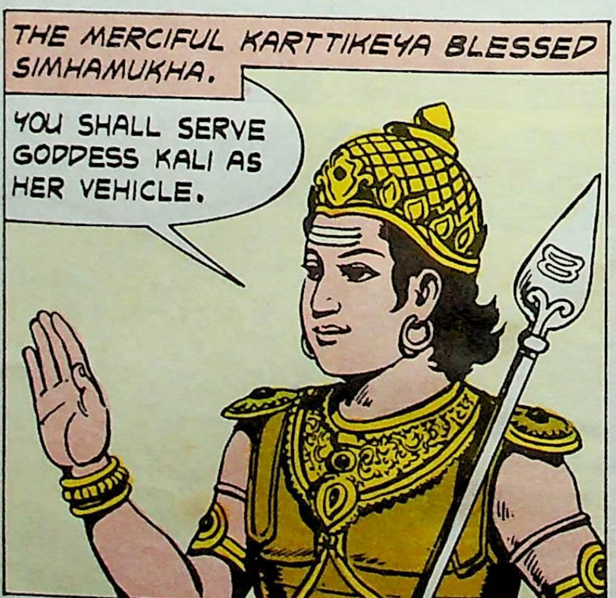

BUT KARTTIKEYA MEANWHILE HAD SENT FORTH SEVERAL MISSILES TO COUNTER THE MOVE.




THEN KARTTIKEYA TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO SIMHAMUKHA.
YOU SHOULD NOT MISUSE THE POWERS ACQUIRED BY YOU. YOU SHOULD...
HAVE YOU COME HERE TO FIGHT OR TO PREACH?


AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE KARTTIKEYA HURLED INDRAYUDHA* AT SIMHAMUKHA.


AS SIMHAMUKHA FELL—
YOUR WEAPON HAS SHATTERED MY EGO. NOW I SEE YOU IN ALL YOUR GLORY. O LORD, BLESS ME.


THE MERCIFUL KARTTIKEYA BLESSED SIMHAMUKHA.
YOU SHALL SERVE GODDESS KALI AS HER VEHICLE.

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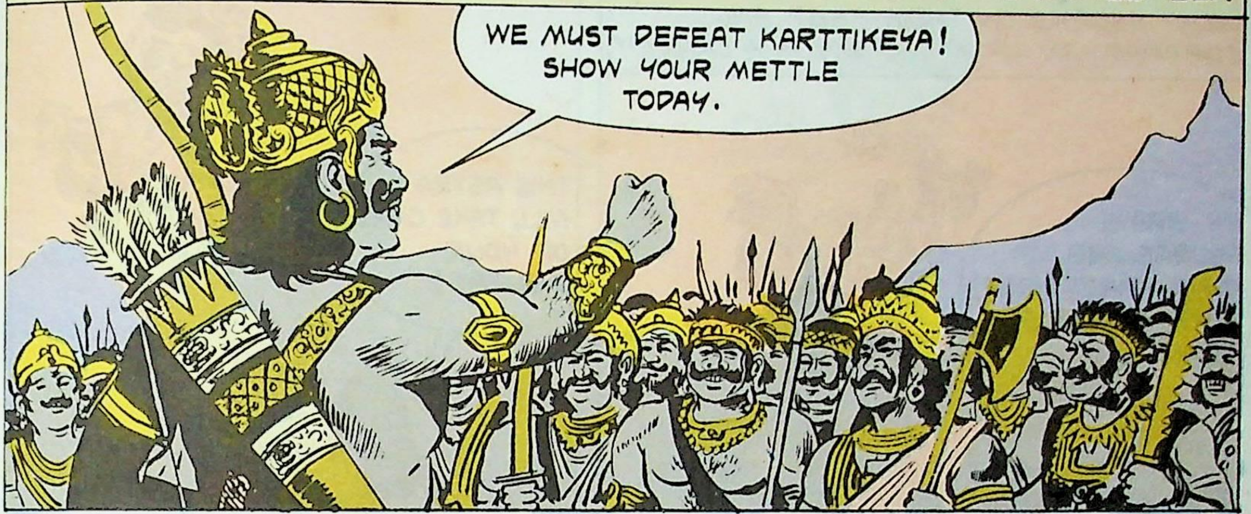
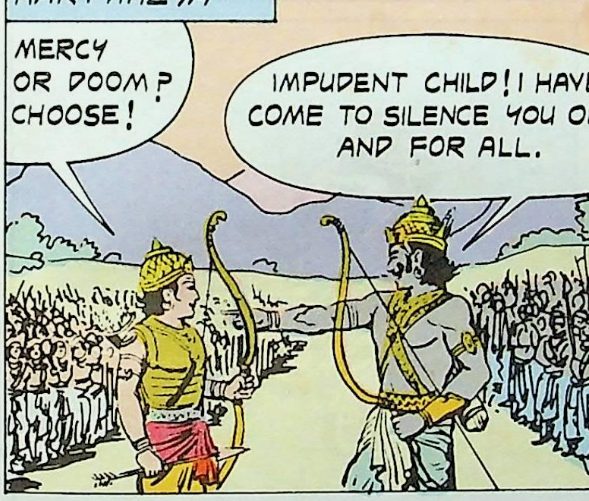
*INDRA'S WEAPON, THE THUNDERBOLT

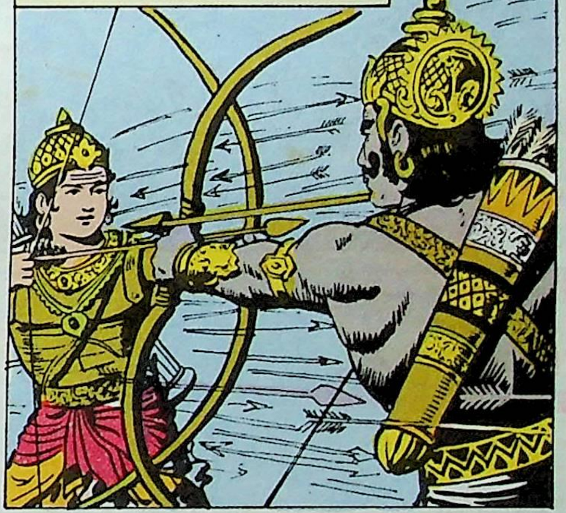
THE NEXT DAY SURAPADMAN HIMSELF LED THE ASURAS TO THE BATTLEFIELD.

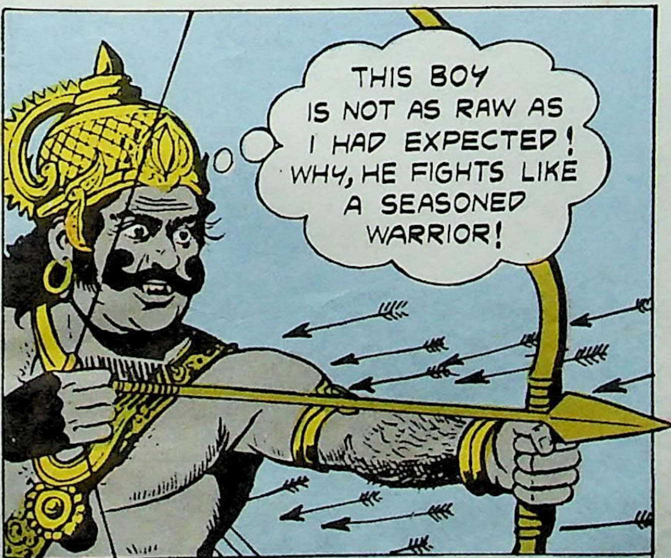

WE MUST DEFEAT KARTTIKEYA! SHOW YOUR METTLE TODAY.

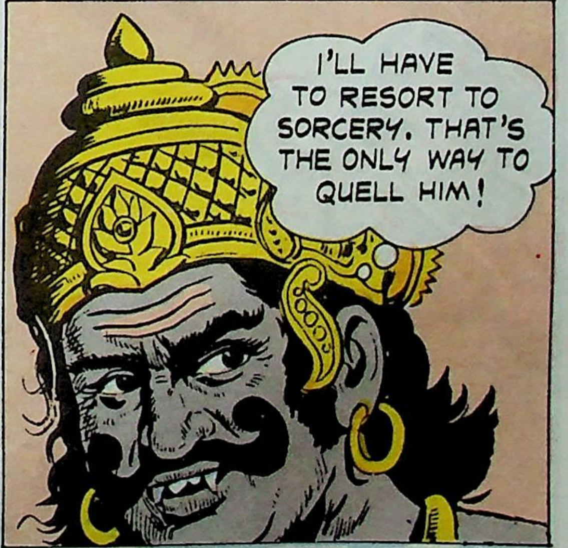
WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARTTIKEYA—

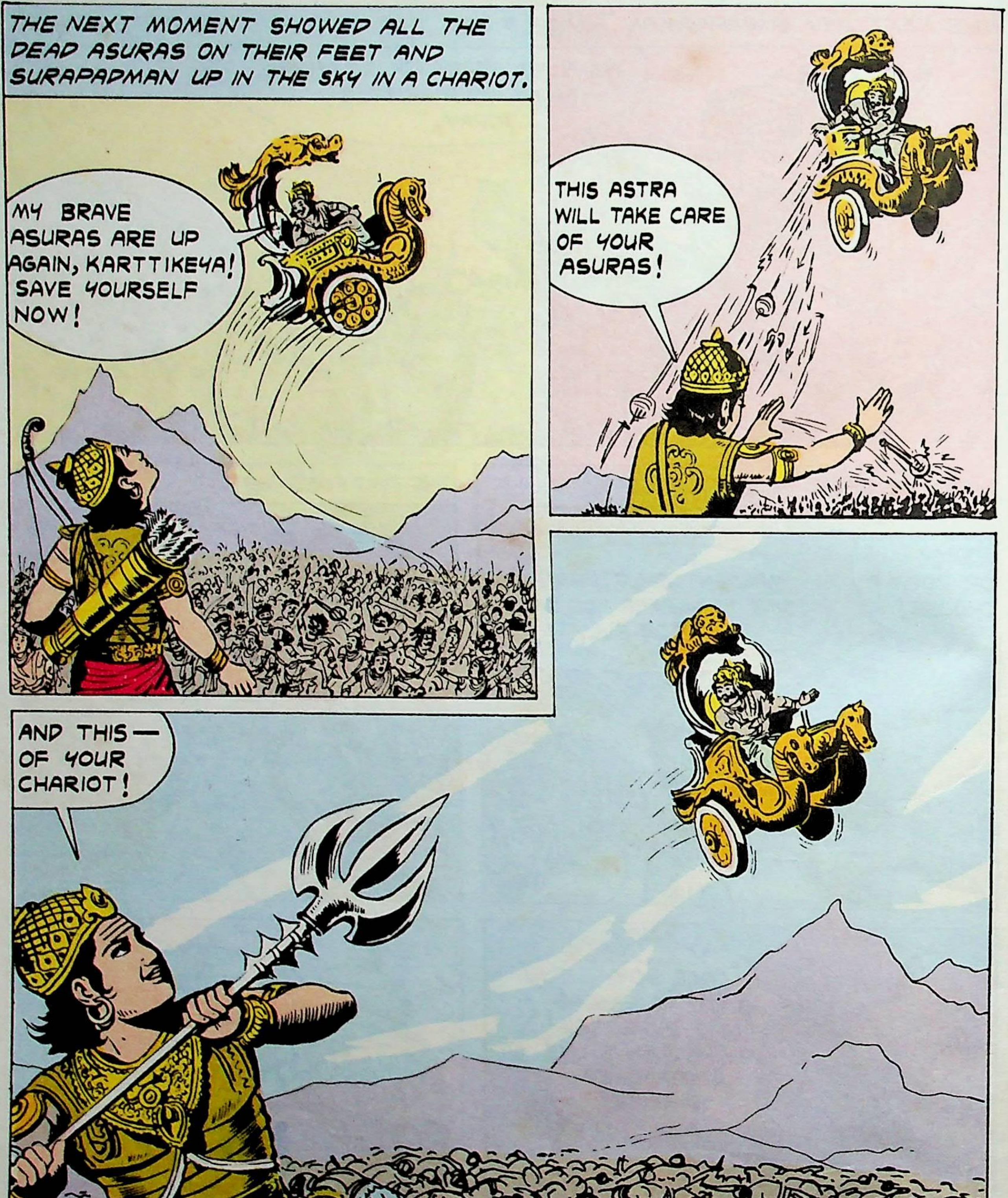

MERCY OR DOOM? CHOOSE!
IMPUDENT CHILD! I HAVE COME TO SILENCE YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL.

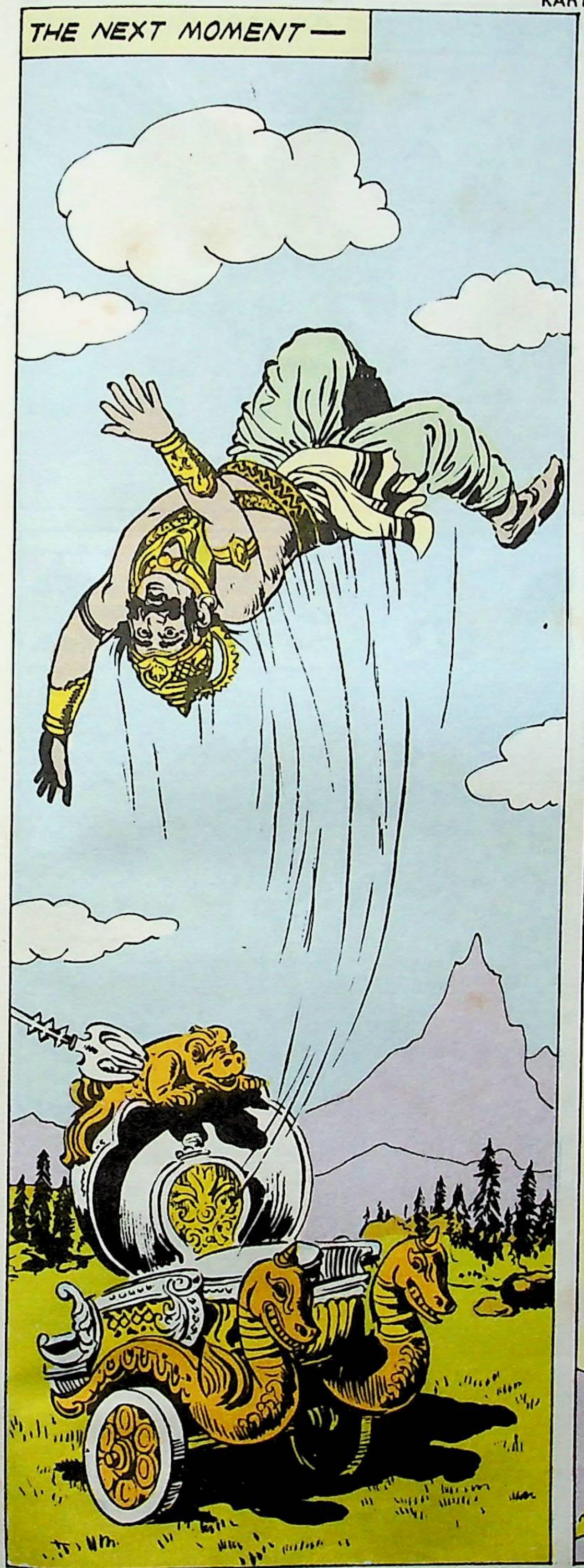
THE TWO FOES MET.

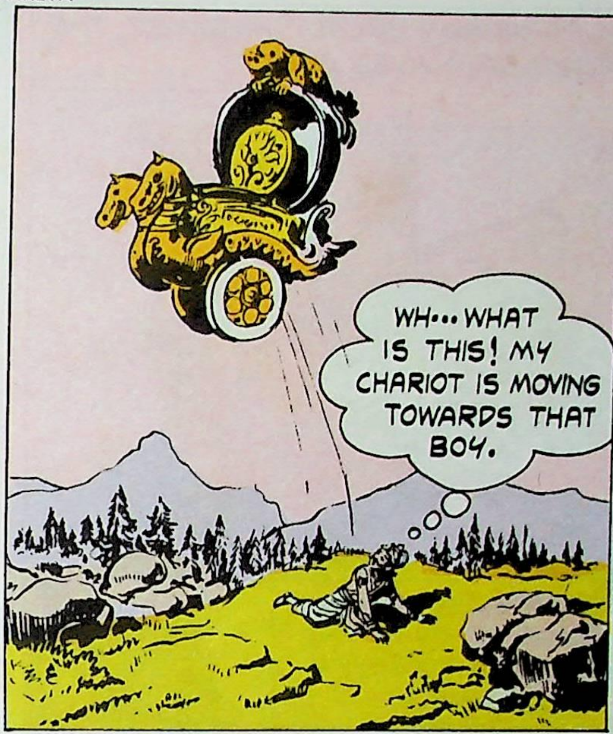


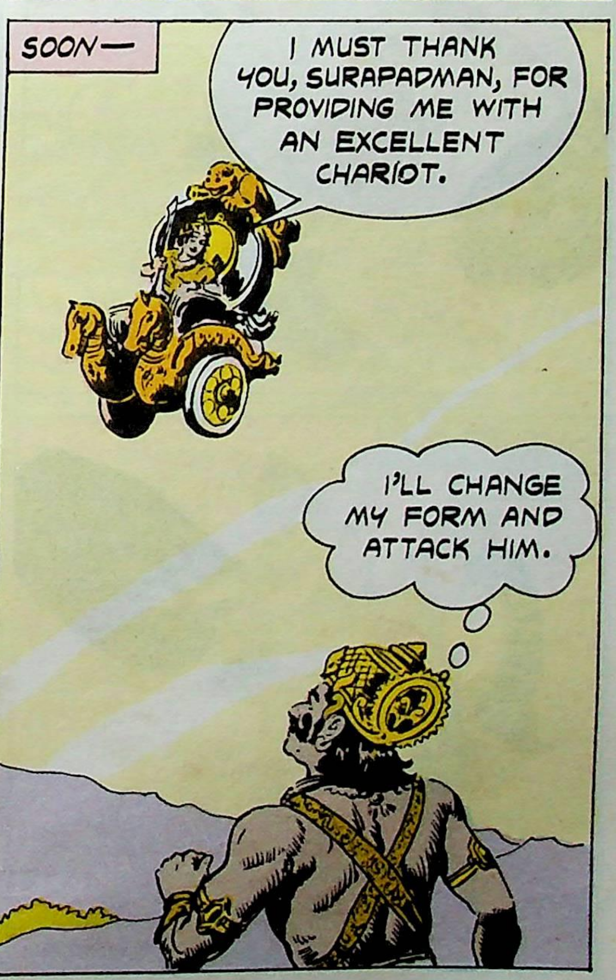

THIS BOY IS NOT AS RAW AS I HAD EXPECTED! WHY, HE FIGHTS LIKE A SEASONED WARRIOR!

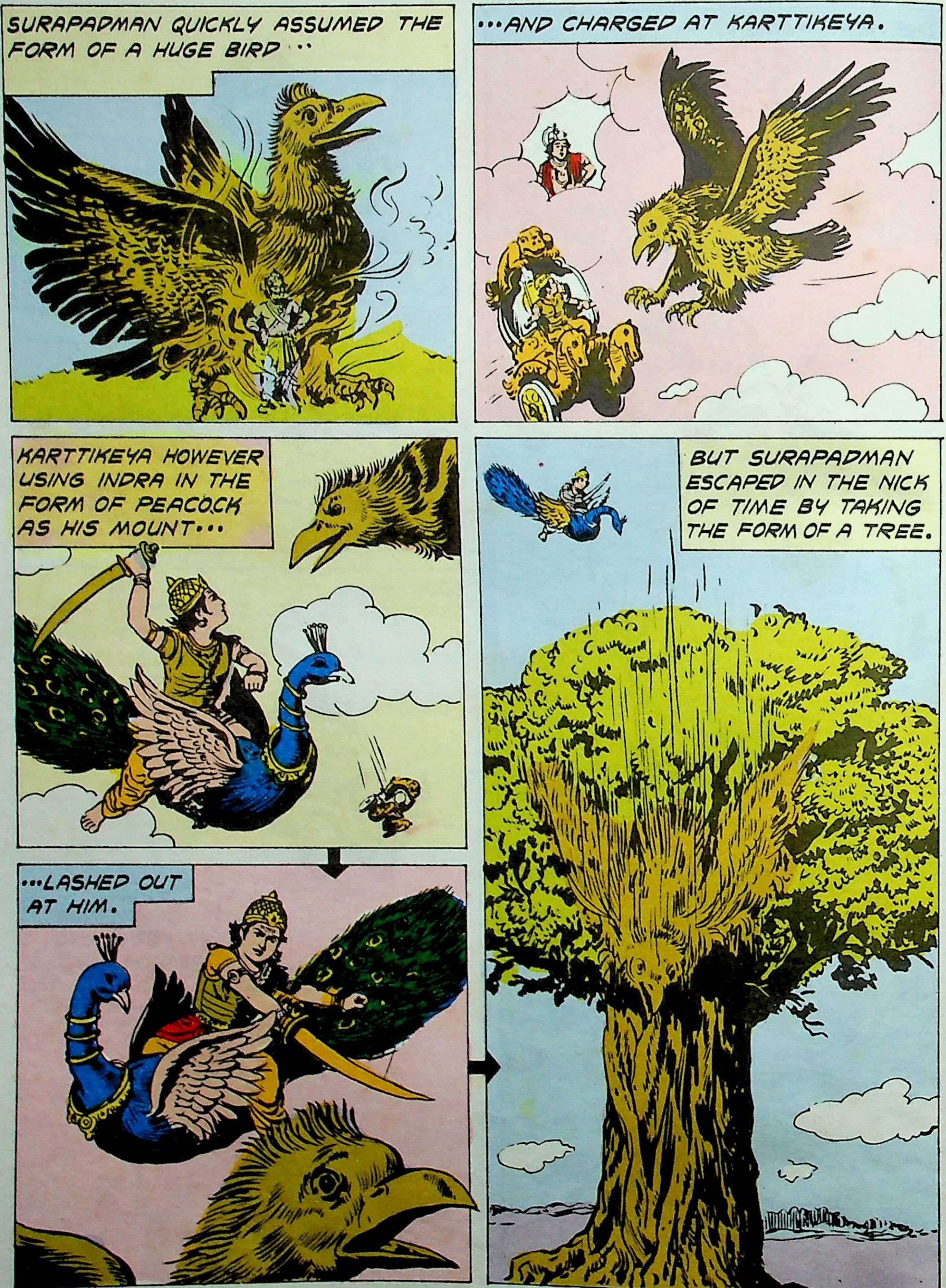

I'LL HAVE TO RESORT TO SORCERY. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO QUELL HIM!

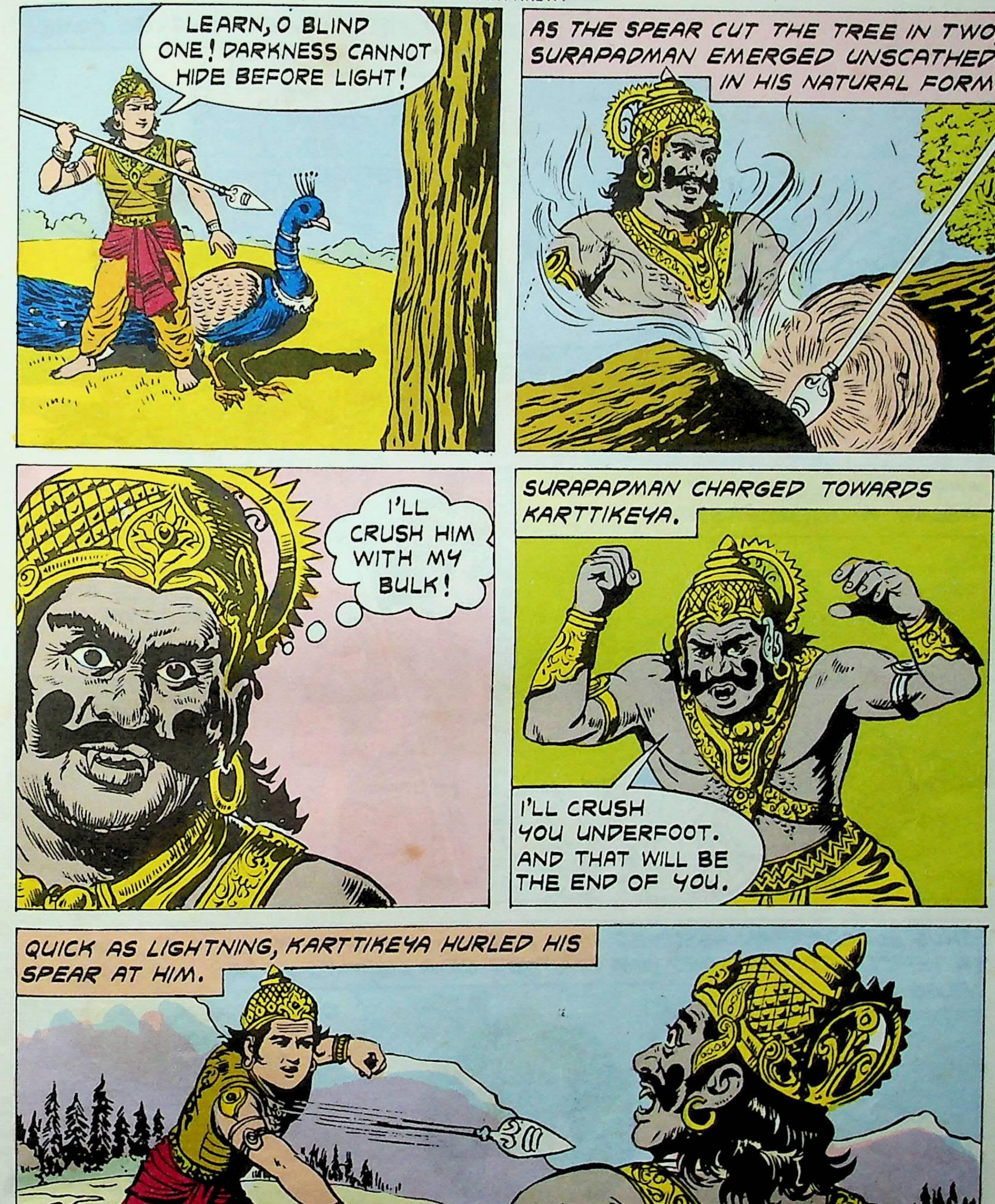

THE NEXT MOMENT SHOWED ALL THE DEAD ASURAS ON THEIR FEET AND SURAPADMAN UP IN THE SKY IN A CHARIOT.
MY BRAVE ASURAS ARE UP AGAIN, KARTTIKEYA! SAVE YOURSELF NOW!
THIS ASTRA WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR ASURAS!
AND THIS — OF YOUR CHARIOT!

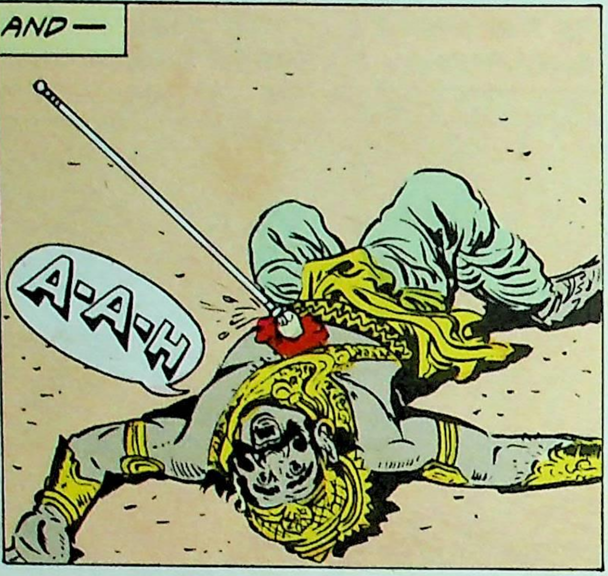

THE NEXT MOMENT—

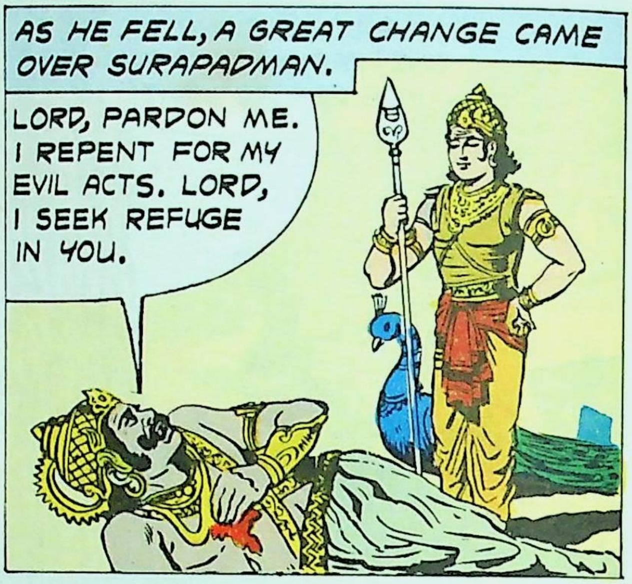

WH... WHAT IS THIS! MY CHARIOT IS MOVING TOWARDS THAT BOY.

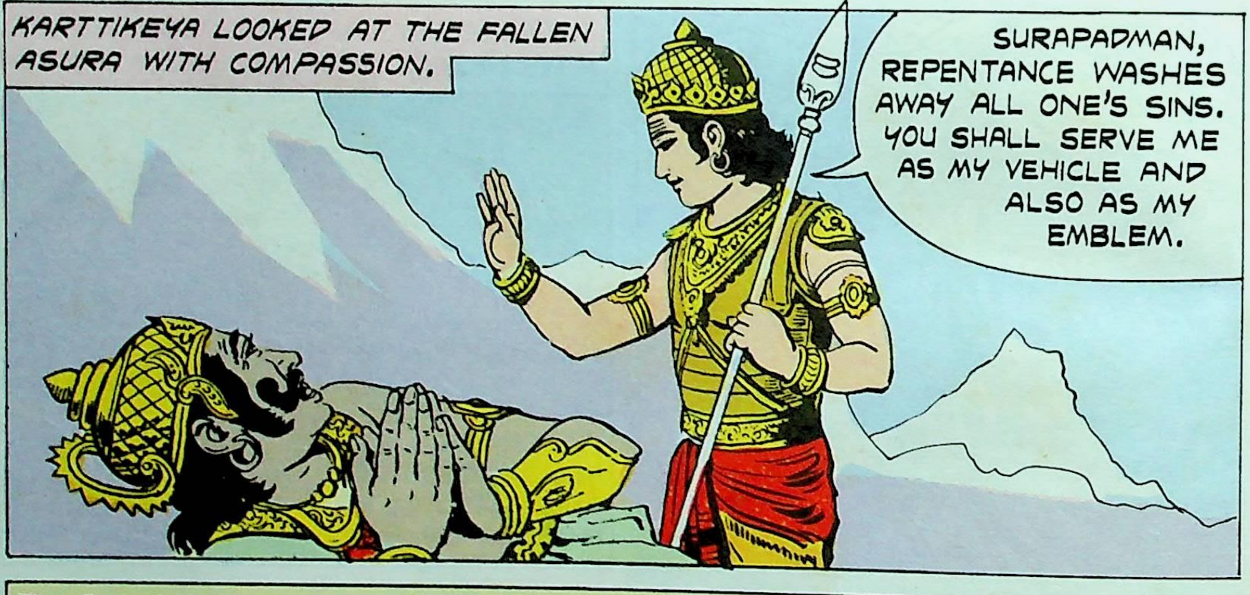

SOON—
I MUST THANK YOU, SURAPADMAN, FOR PROVIDING ME WITH AN EXCELLENT CHARIOT.
I'LL CHANGE MY FORM AND ATTACK HIM.

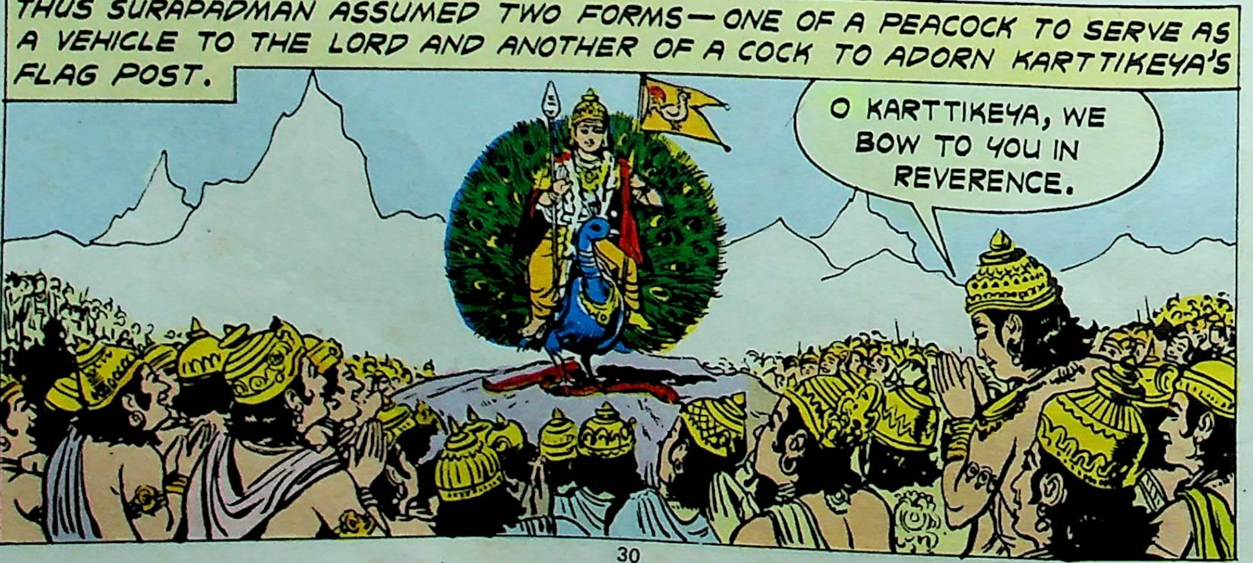

SURAPADMAN QUICKLY ASSUMED THE FORM OF A HUGE BIRD ···
···AND CHARGED AT KARTTIKEYA.
KARTTIKEYA HOWEVER USING INDRA IN THE FORM OF PEACOCK AS HIS MOUNT···
···LASHED OUT AT HIM.
BUT SURAPADMAN ESCAPED IN THE NICK OF TIME BY TAKING THE FORM OF A TREE.


LEARN, O BLIND ONE! DARKNESS CANNOT HIDE BEFORE LIGHT!
AS THE SPEAR CUT THE TREE IN TWO, SURAPADMAN EMERGED UNSCATHED IN HIS NATURAL FORM.
I'LL CRUSH HIM WITH MY BULK!
SURAPADMAN CHARGED TOWARDS KARTTIKEYA.
I'LL CRUSH YOU UNDERFOOT. AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF YOU.
QUICK AS LIGHTNING, KARTTIKEYA HURLED HIS SPEAR AT HIM.


AND—
A-A-H


AS HE FELL, A GREAT CHANGE CAME OVER SURAPADMAN.
LORD, PARDON ME. I REPENT FOR MY EVIL ACTS. LORD, I SEEK REFUGE IN YOU.


KARTTIKEYA LOOKED AT THE FALLEN ASURA WITH COMPASSION.
SURAPADMAN, REPENTANCE WASHES AWAY ALL ONE'S SINS. YOU SHALL SERVE ME AS MY VEHICLE AND ALSO AS MY EMBLEM.


THUS SURAPADMAN ASSUMED TWO FORMS— ONE OF A PEACOCK TO SERVE AS A VEHICLE TO THE LORD AND ANOTHER OF A COCK TO ADORN KARTTIKEYA'S FLAG POST.
O KARTTIKEYA, WE BOW TO YOU IN REVERENCE.

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AYYAPPAN

With Shiva and Vishnu as parents, a child's life is bound to be unusual. Ayyappan's courage is unlimited and his wisdom unmatched. Vicious tigresses fall under his spell just as avenging demons succumb to his divine strength. Only power-crazed human beings are foolish enough to try to destroy this extraordinary lad. But, as he ascends to his rightful place as the god of Shabarimala, the glow of Ayyappan's compassion makes even earthly riches lose their glitter.

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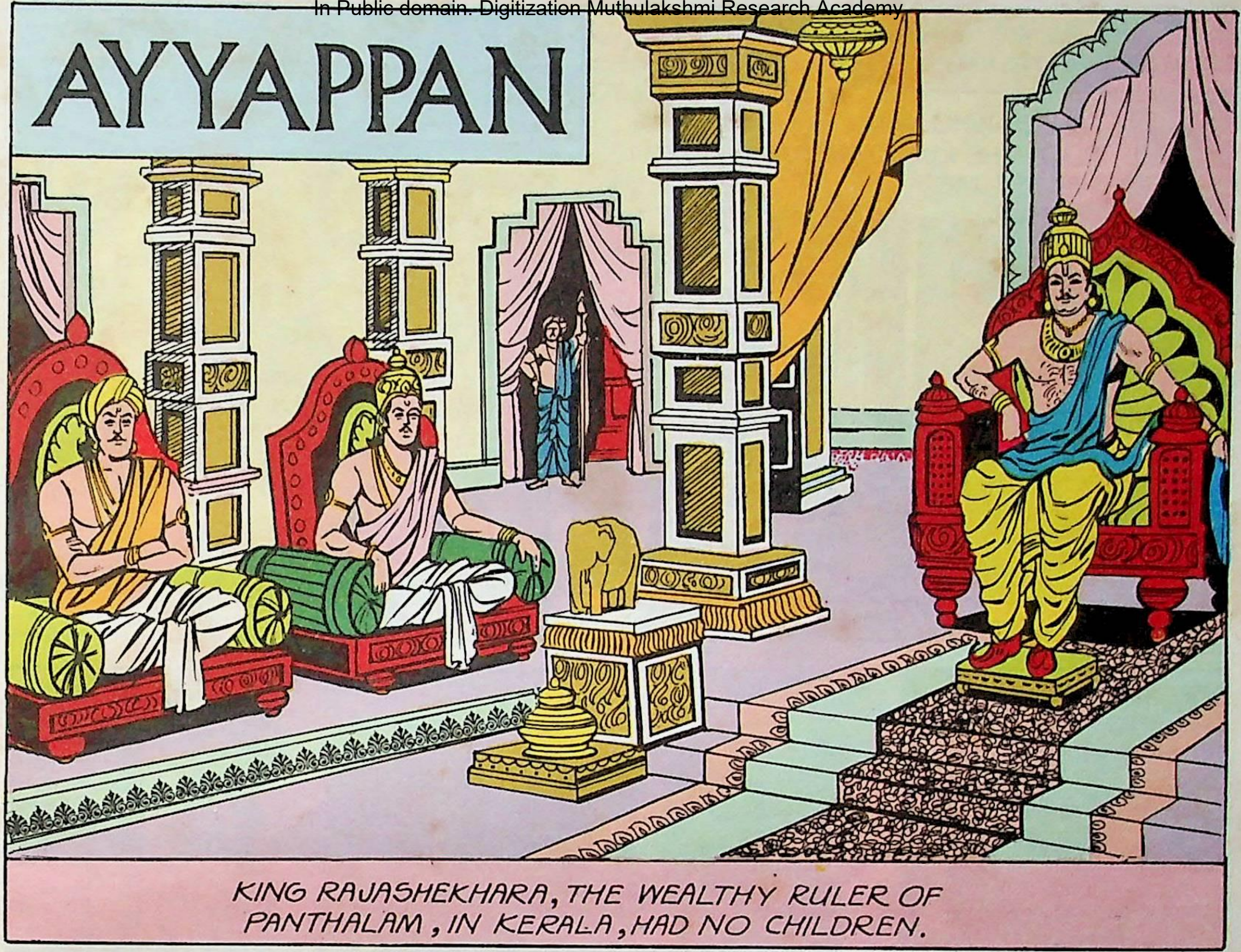
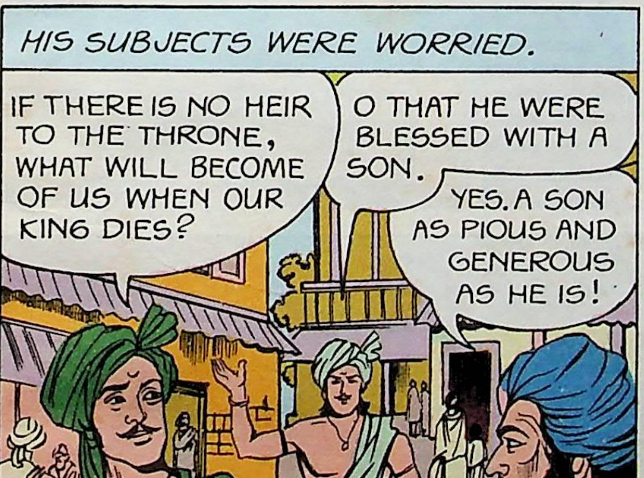
Illustrations
M. Mohandas

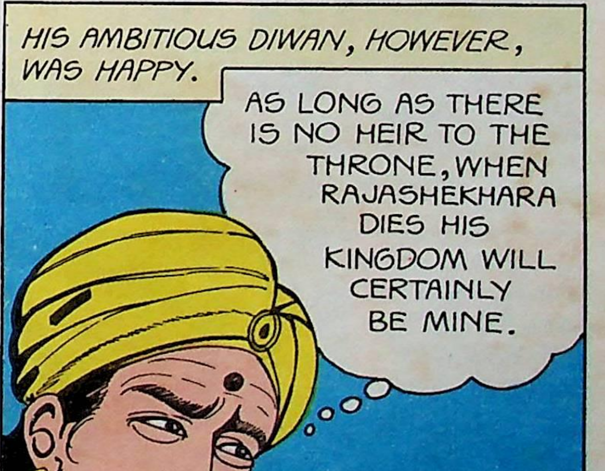
Editor
Anant Pai

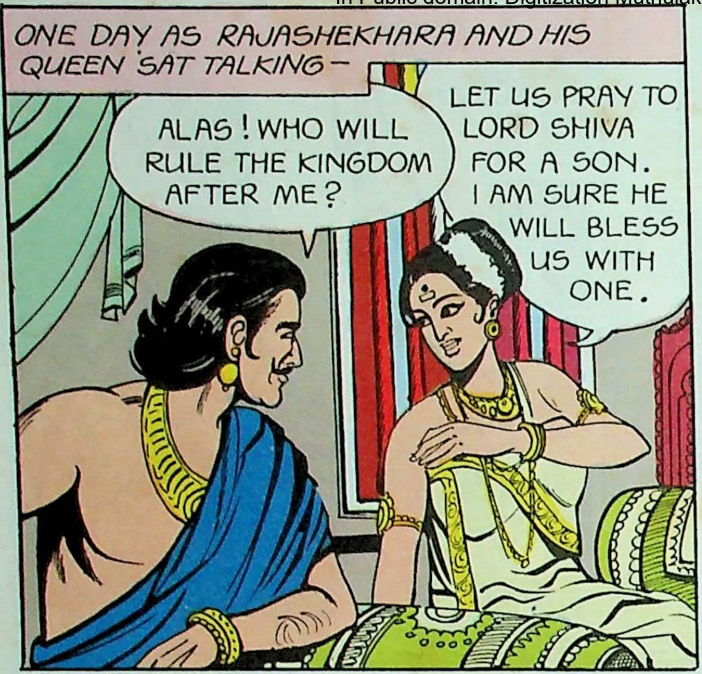
Cover illustration by: C.M.Vitankar

AYYAPPAN

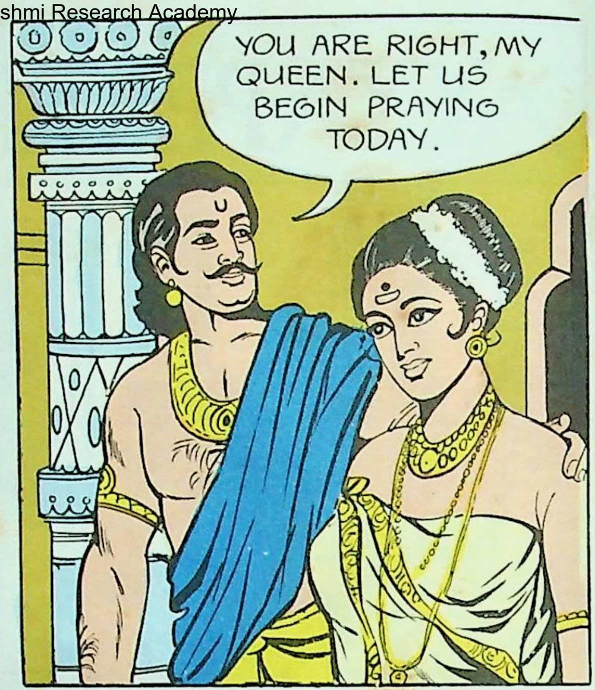

KING RAJASHEKHARA, THE WEALTHY RULER OF PANTHALAM, IN KERALA, HAD NO CHILDREN.

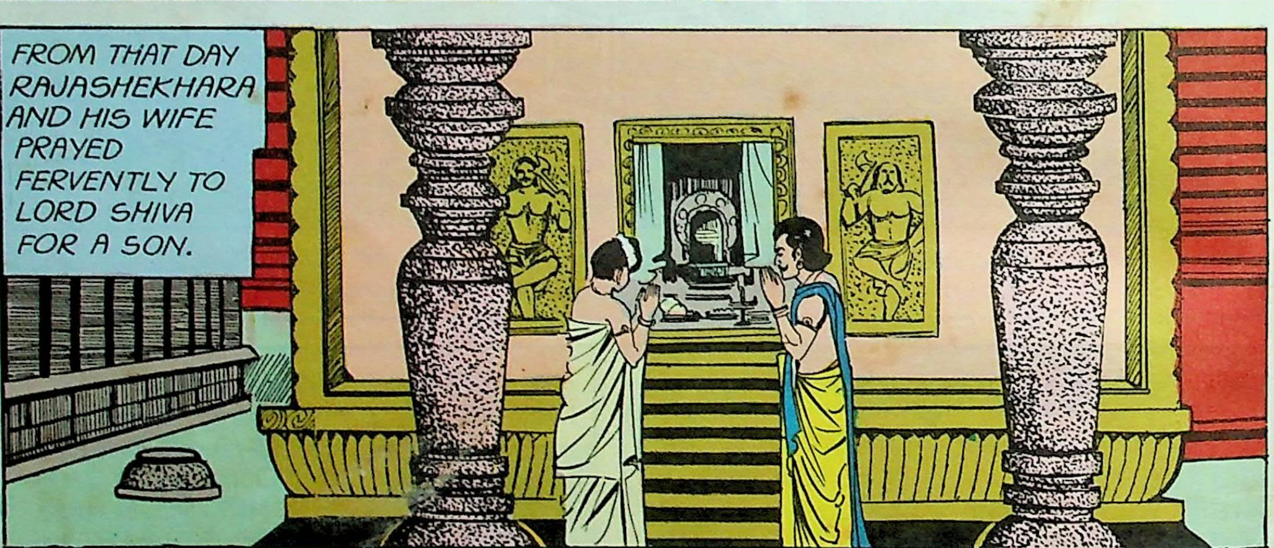

HIS SUBJECTS WERE WORRIED.
IF THERE IS NO HEIR TO THE THRONE, WHAT WILL BECOME OF US WHEN OUR KING DIES?
O THAT HE WERE BLESSED WITH A SON.
YES. A SON AS PIOUS AND GENEROUS AS HE IS!

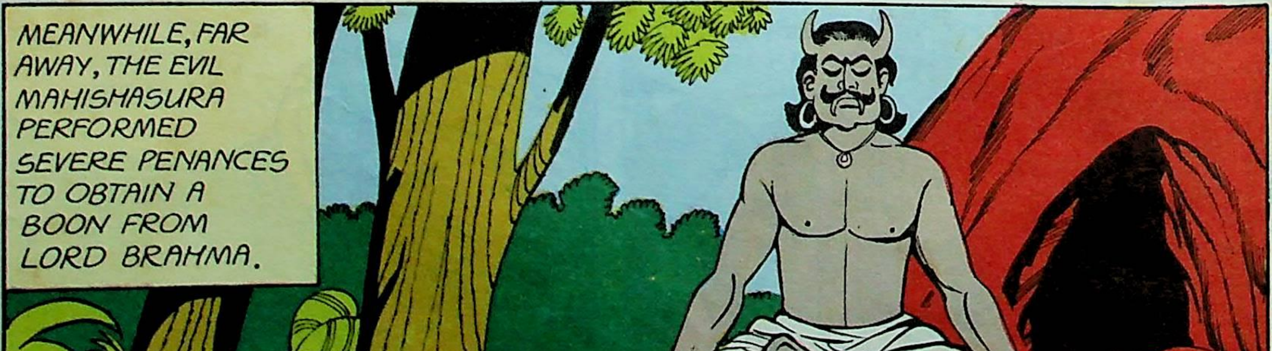

HIS AMBITIOUS DIWAN, HOWEVER, WAS HAPPY.
AS LONG AS THERE IS NO HEIR TO THE THRONE, WHEN RAJASHEKHARA DIES HIS KINGDOM WILL CERTAINLY BE MINE.

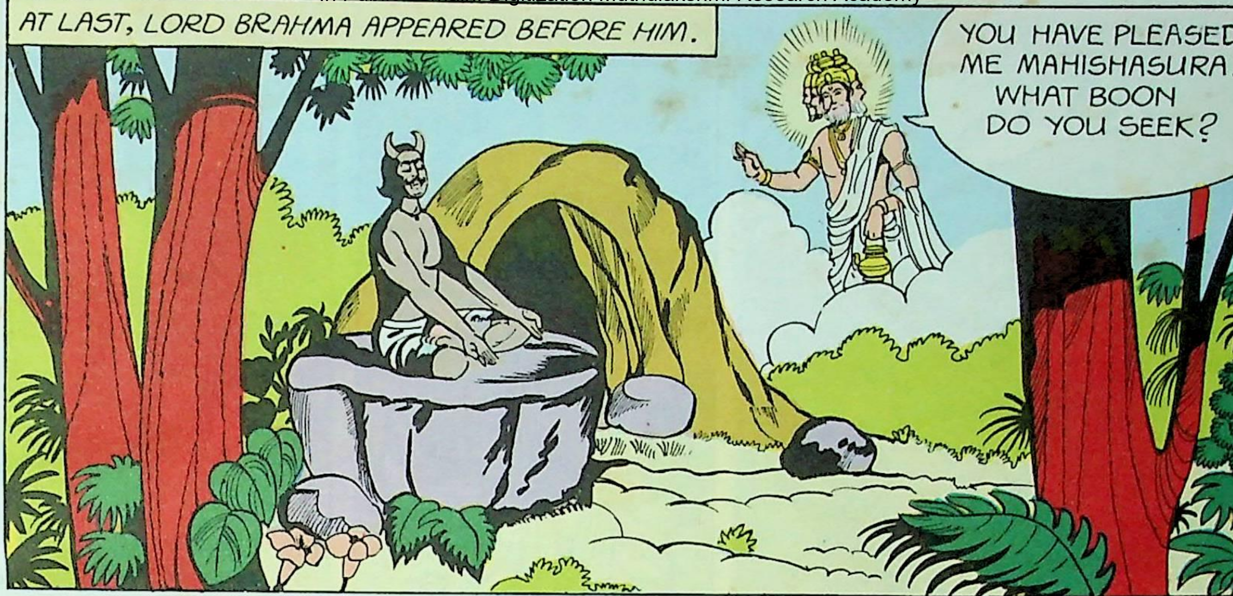

ONE DAY AS RAJASHEKHARA AND HIS QUEEN SAT TALKING –

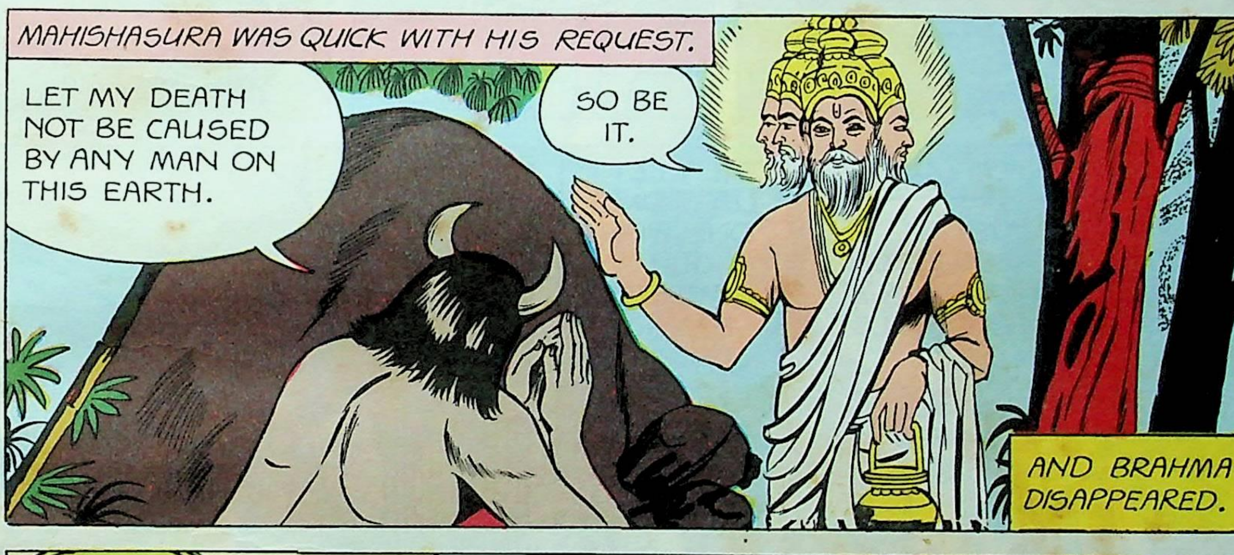
ALAS! WHO WILL RULE THE KINGDOM AFTER ME?
LET US PRAY TO LORD SHIVA FOR A SON. I AM SURE HE WILL BLESS US WITH ONE.

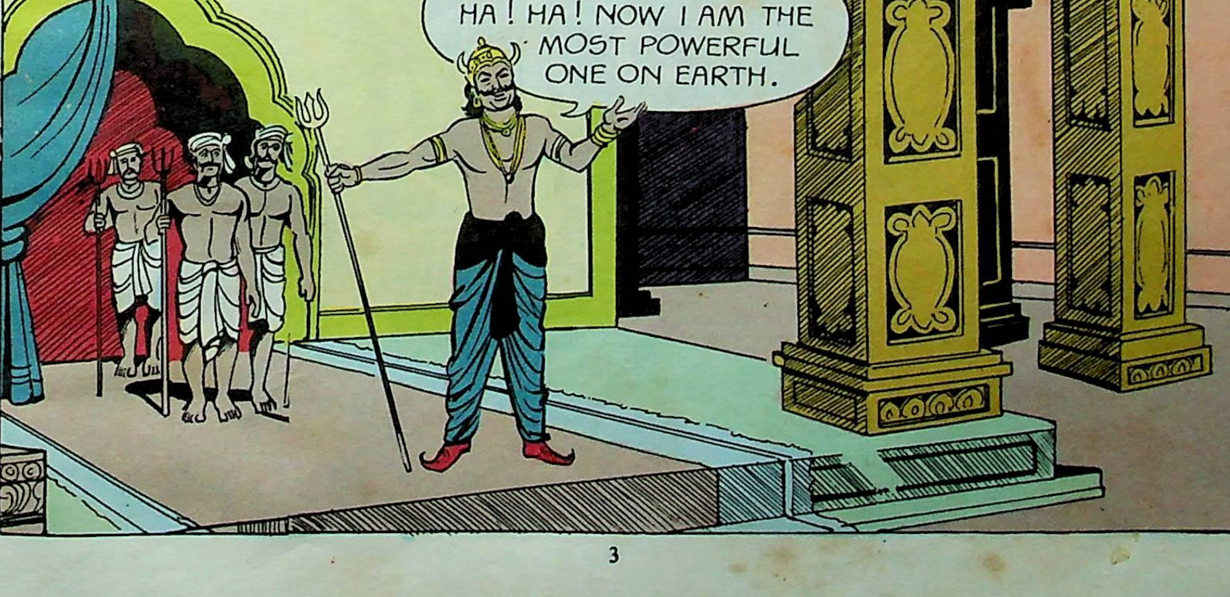

YOU ARE RIGHT, MY QUEEN. LET US BEGIN PRAYING TODAY.


FROM THAT DAY RAJASHEKHARA AND HIS WIFE PRAYED FERVENTLY TO LORD SHIVA FOR A SON.

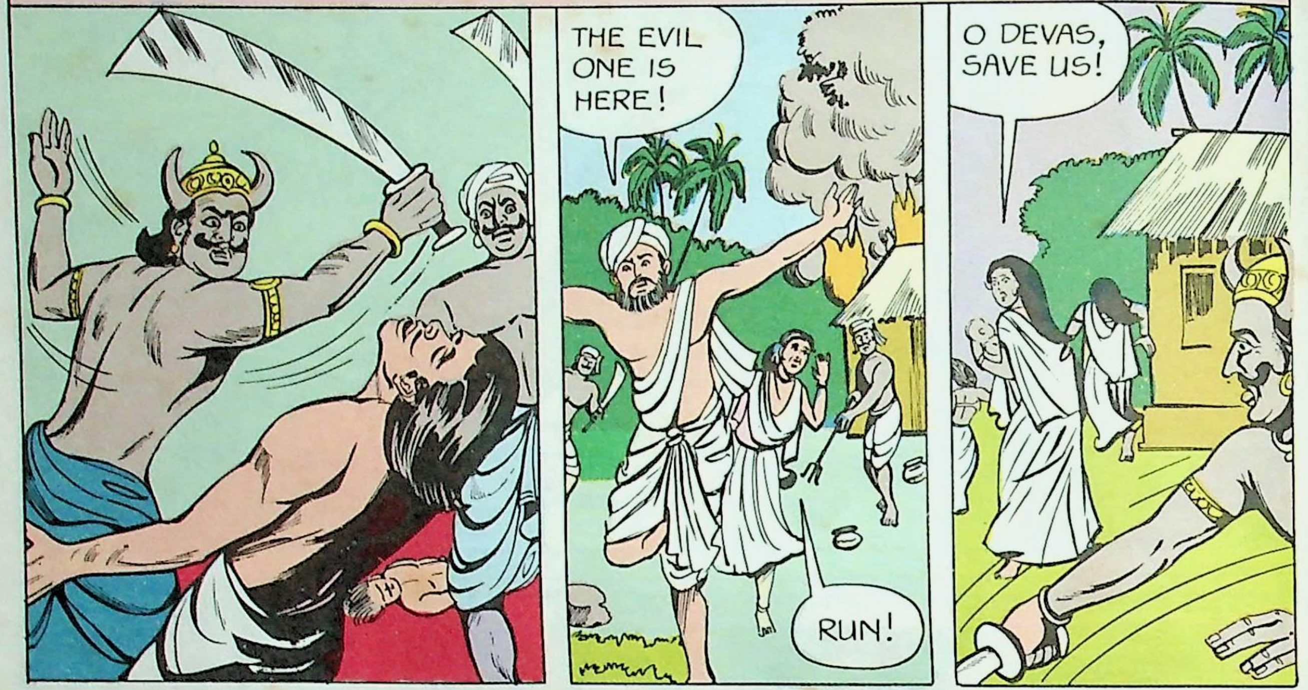

MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY, THE EVIL MAHISHASURA PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO OBTAIN A BOON FROM LORD BRAHMA.


AT LAST, LORD BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.
YOU HAVE PLEASED ME MAHISHASURA. WHAT BOON DO YOU SEEK?

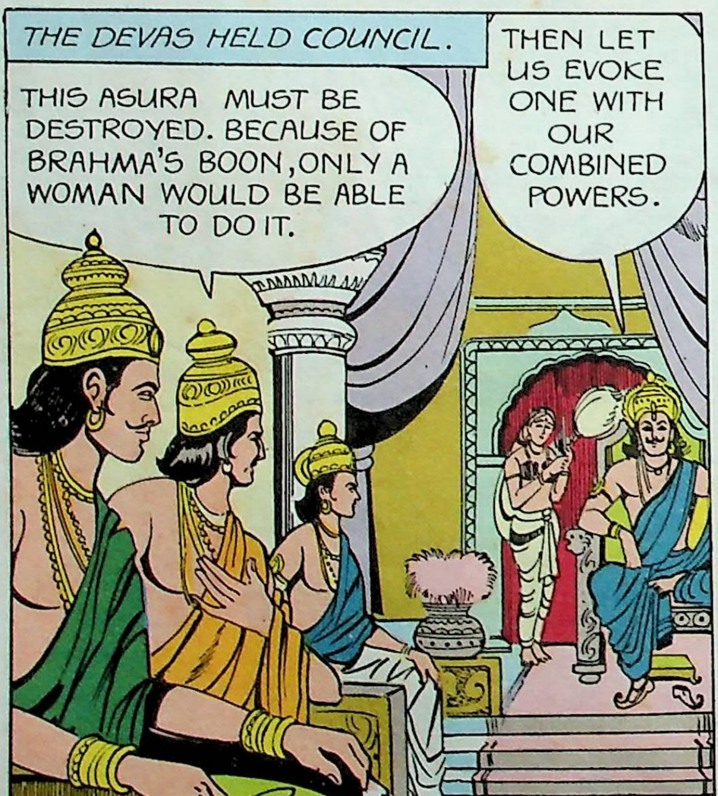

MAHISHASURA WAS QUICK WITH HIS REQUEST.
LET MY DEATH NOT BE CAUSED BY ANY MAN ON THIS EARTH.
SO BE IT.
AND BRAHMA DISAPPEARED.

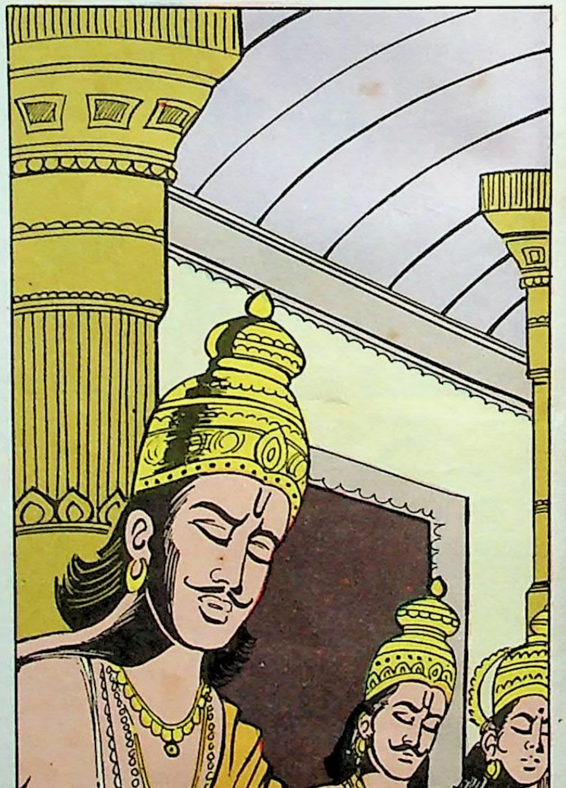

HA! HA! NOW I AM THE MOST POWERFUL ONE ON EARTH.

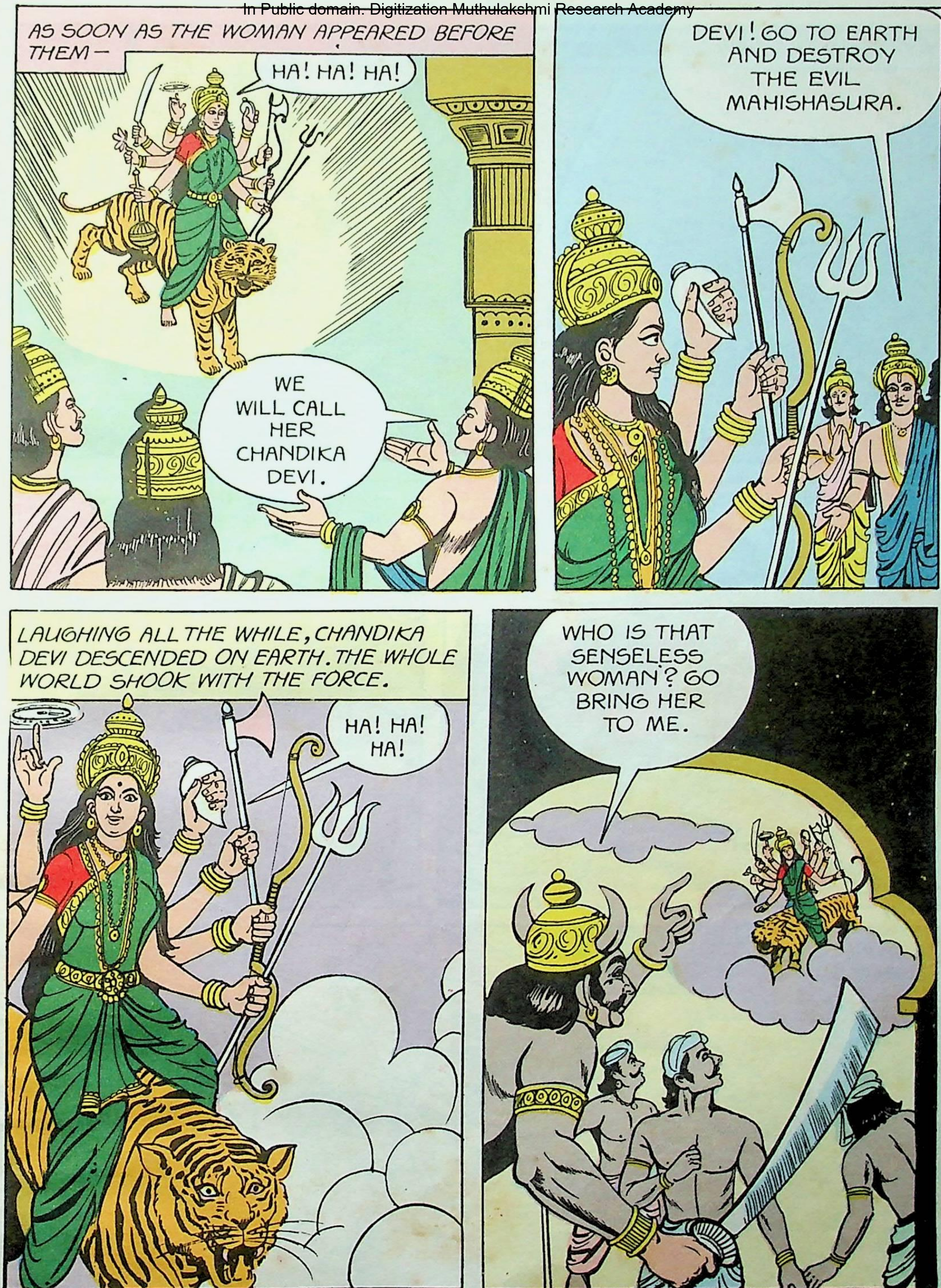
EMBOLDENED BY THE BOON, MAHISHASURA BEGAN HARASSING ALL ON EARTH.

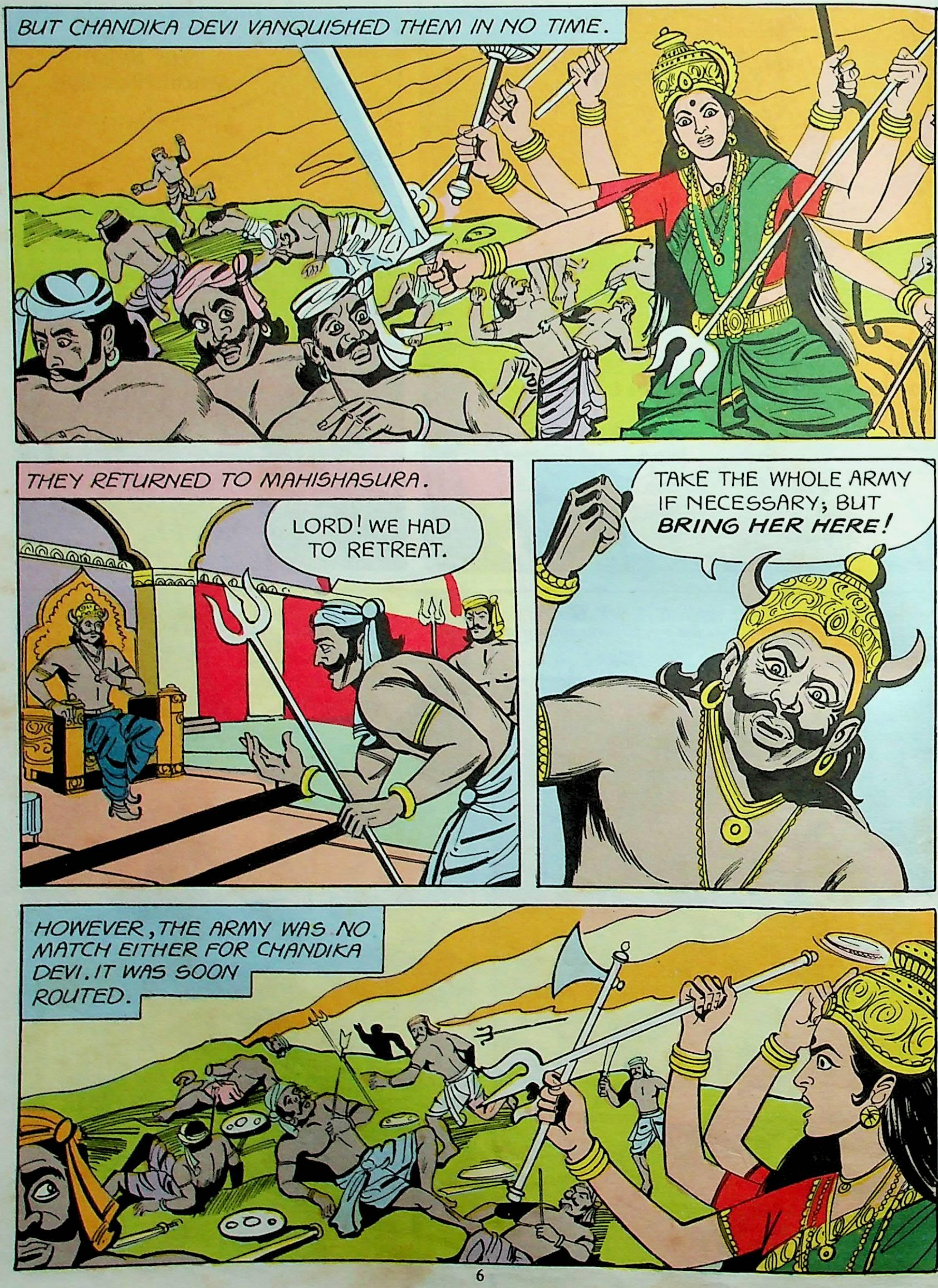

THE EVIL ONE IS HERE!
RUN!
O DEVAS, SAVE US!

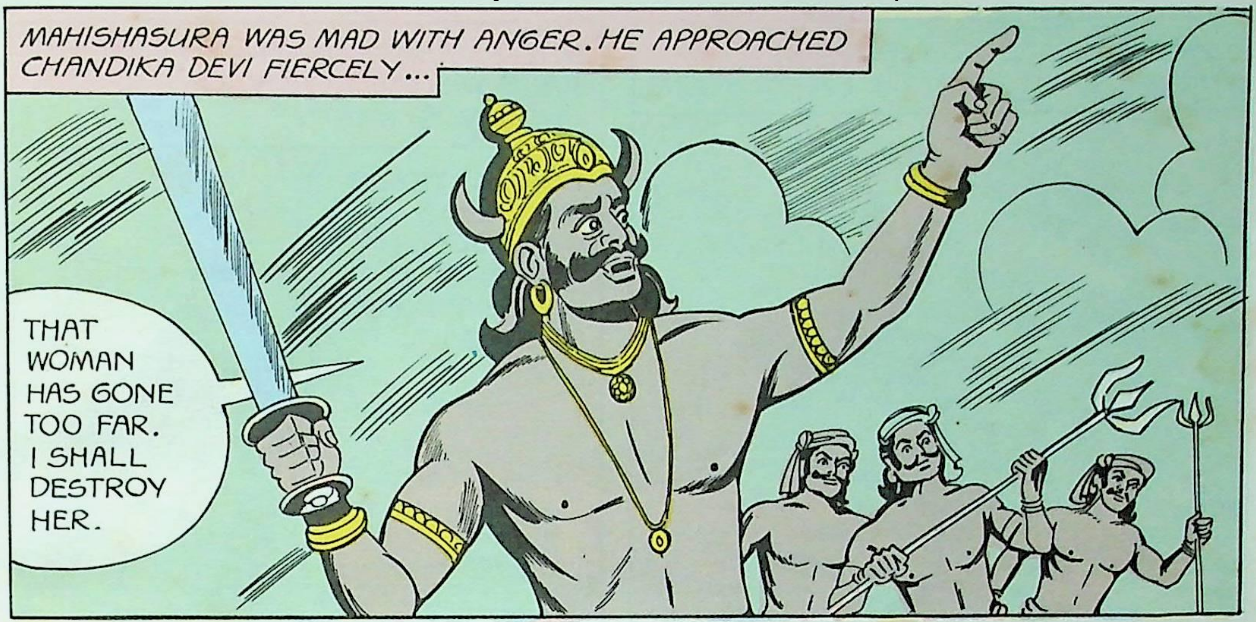
THE DEVAS HELD COUNCIL.

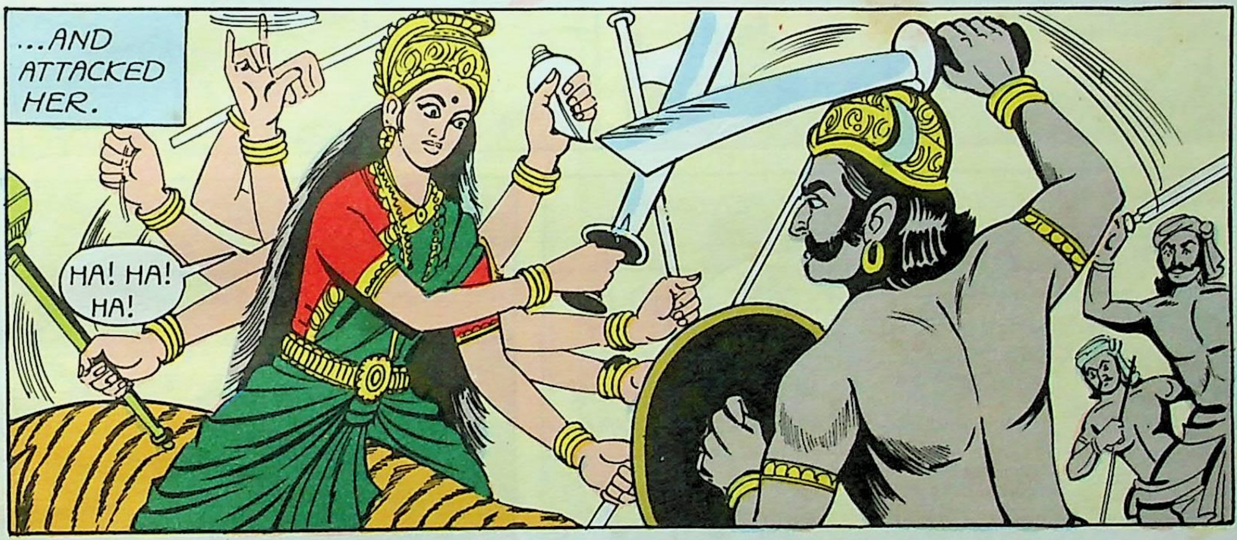

THIS ASURA MUST BE DESTROYED. BECAUSE OF BRAHMA'S BOON, ONLY A WOMAN WOULD BE ABLE TO DO IT.
THEN LET US EVOKE ONE WITH OUR COMBINED POWERS.

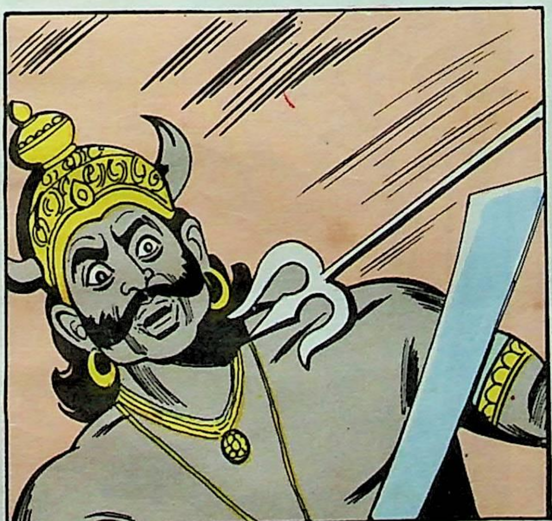


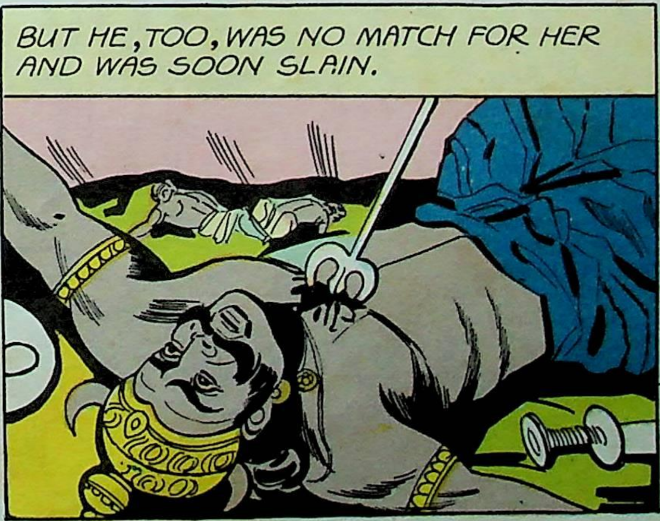

AS SOON AS THE WOMAN APPEARED BEFORE THEM –
HA! HA! HA!
WE WILL CALL HER CHANDIKA DEVI.
DEVI! GO TO EARTH AND DESTROY THE EVIL MAHISHASURA.
LAUGHING ALL THE WHILE, CHANDIKA DEVI DESCENDED ON EARTH. THE WHOLE WORLD SHOOK WITH THE FORCE.
HA! HA! HA!
WHO IS THAT SENSELESS WOMAN? GO BRING HER TO ME.

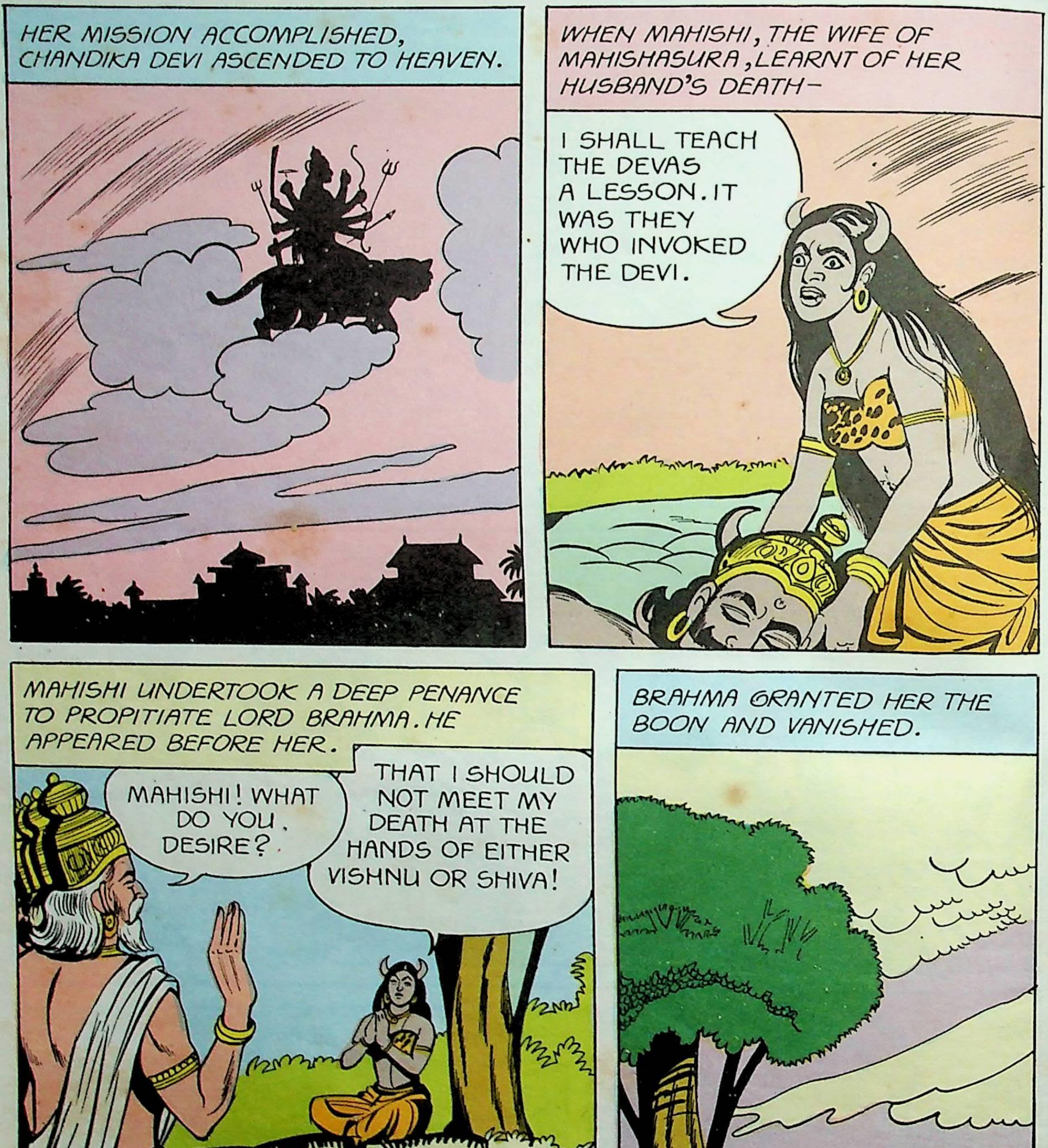

BUT CHANDIKA DEVI VANQUISHED THEM IN NO TIME.
THEY RETURNED TO MAHISHASURA.
LORD! WE HAD TO RETREAT.
TAKE THE WHOLE ARMY IF NECESSARY; BUT **BRING HER HERE!**
HOWEVER, THE ARMY WAS NO MATCH EITHER FOR CHANDIKA DEVI. IT WAS SOON ROUTED.

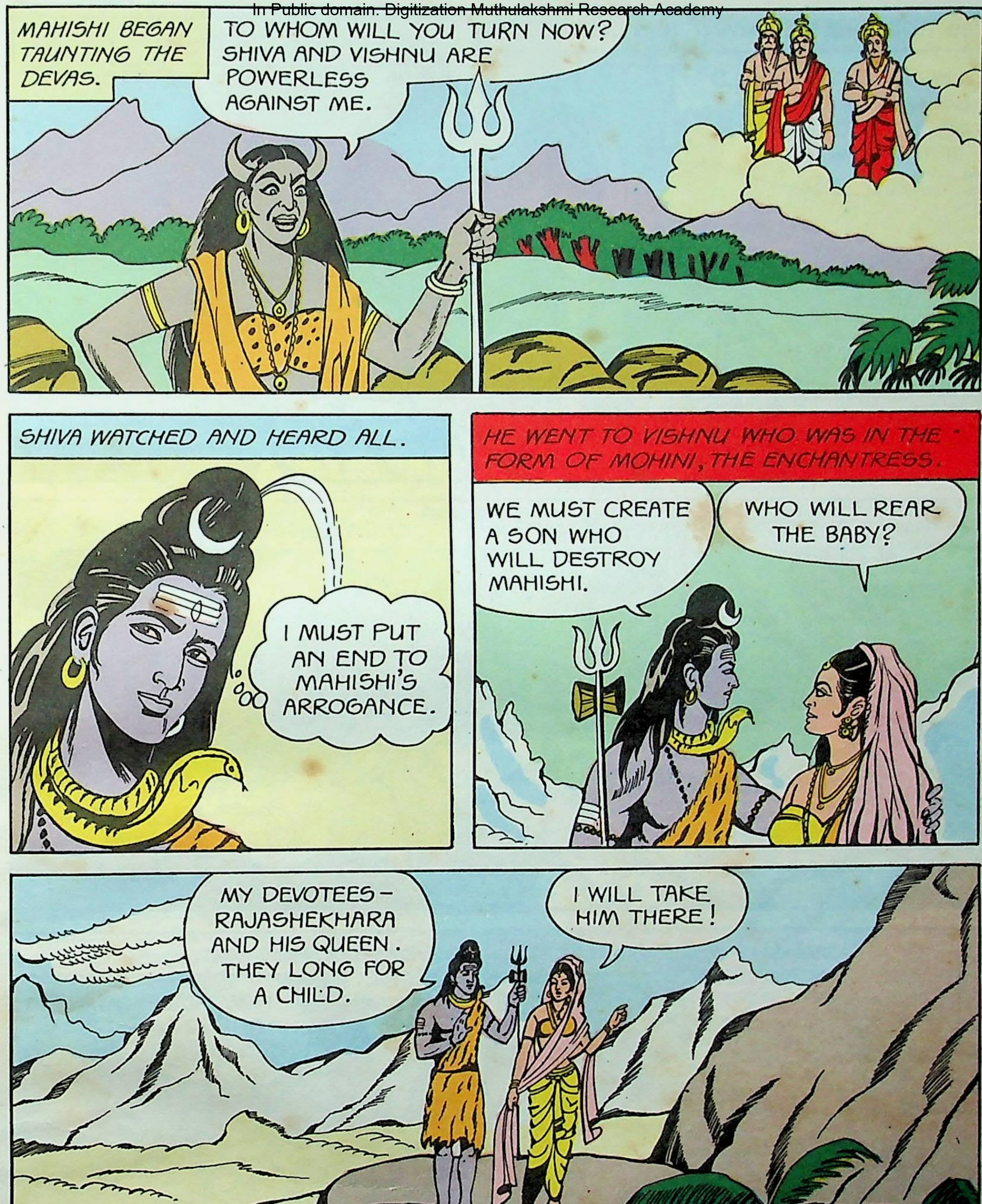

MAHISHASURA WAS MAD WITH ANGER. HE APPROACHED CHANDIKA DEVI FIERCELY...
THAT WOMAN HAS GONE TOO FAR. I SHALL DESTROY HER.

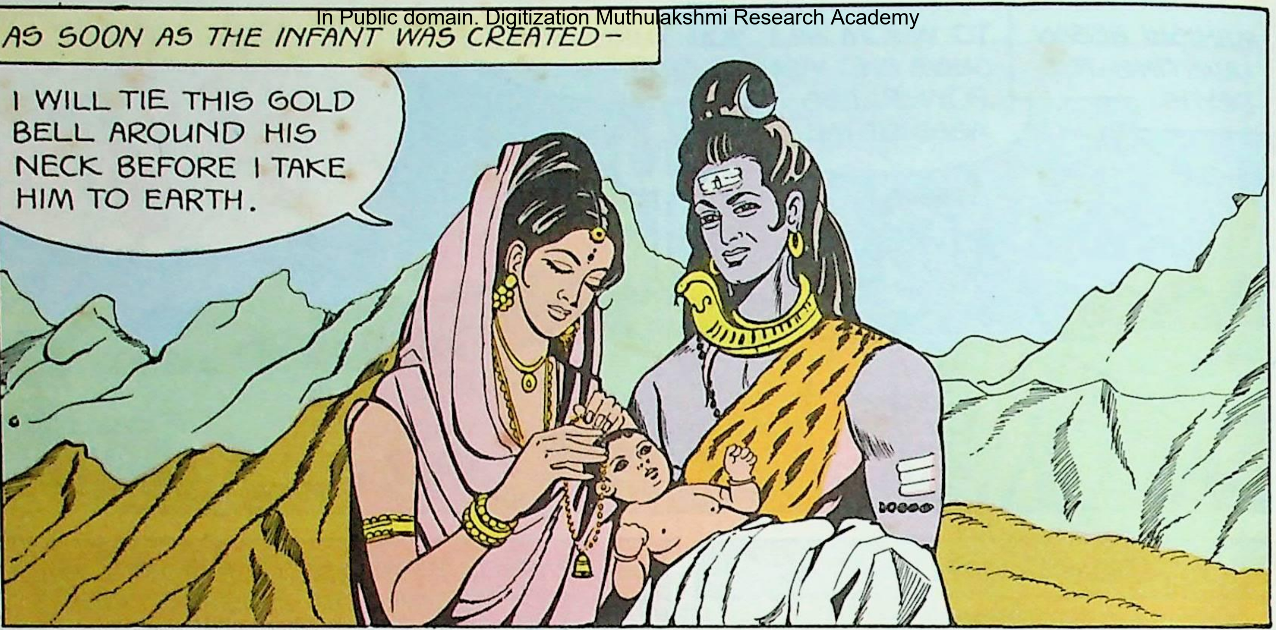

...AND ATTACKED HER.
HA! HA! HA!

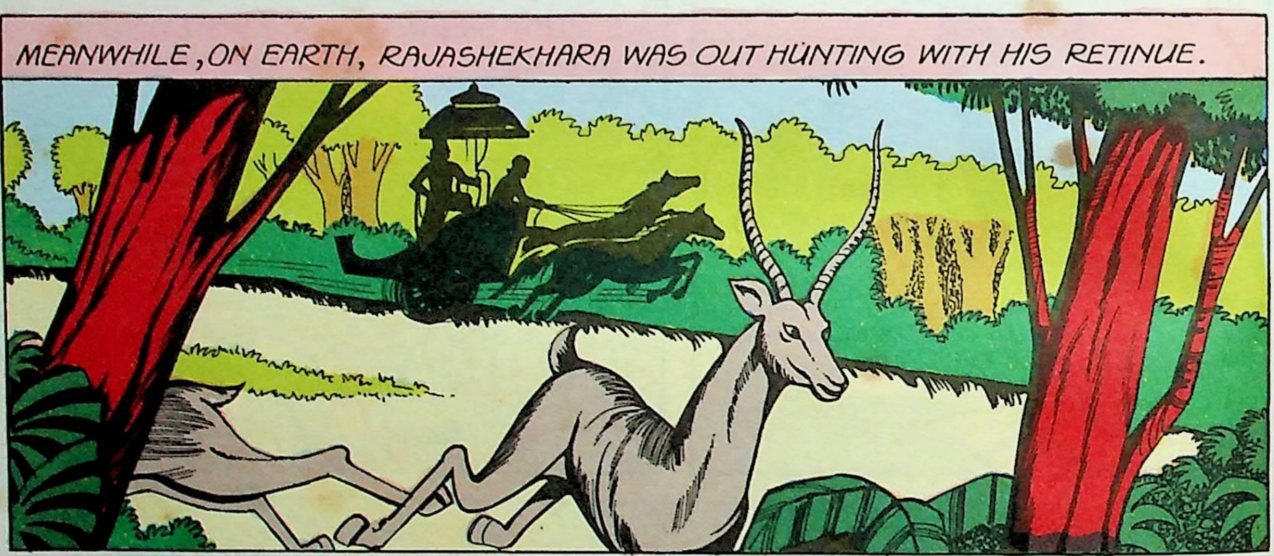


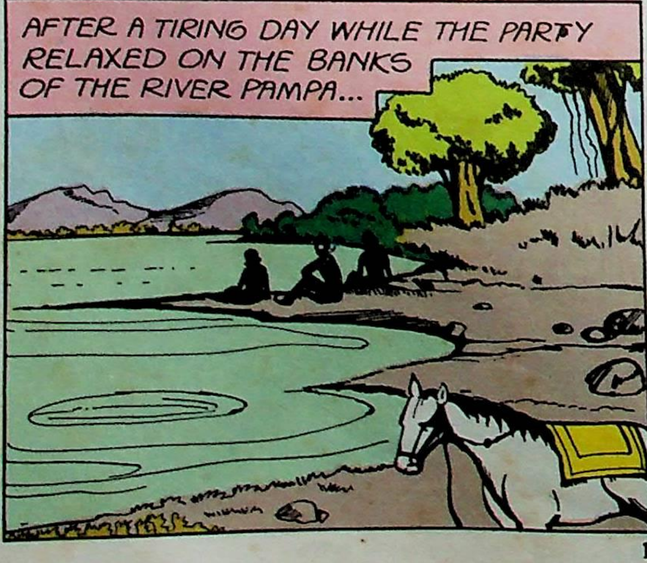

BUT HE, TOO, WAS NO MATCH FOR HER AND WAS SOON SLAIN.

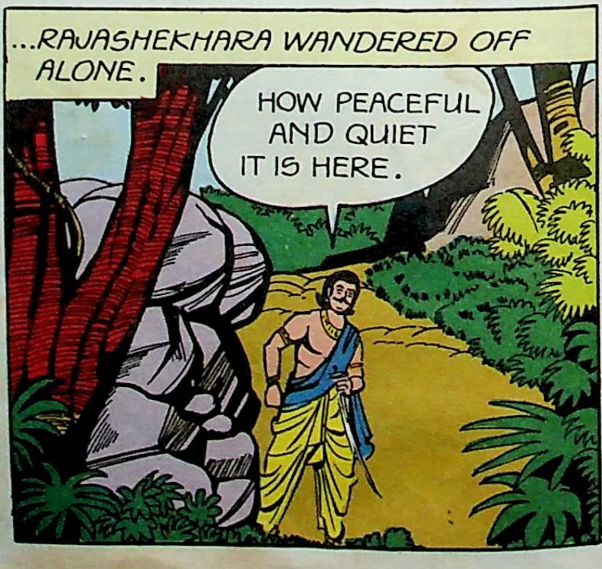

HER MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, CHANDIKA DEVI ASCENDED TO HEAVEN.
WHEN MAHISHI, THE WIFE OF MAHISHASURA, LEARNT OF HER HUSBAND'S DEATH–
I SHALL TEACH THE DEVAS A LESSON. IT WAS THEY WHO INVOKED THE DEVI.
MAHISHI UNDERTOOK A DEEP PENANCE TO PROPITIATE LORD BRAHMA. HE APPEARED BEFORE HER.
MAHISHI! WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?
THAT I SHOULD NOT MEET MY DEATH AT THE HANDS OF EITHER VISHNU OR SHIVA!
BRAHMA GRANTED HER THE BOON AND VANISHED.

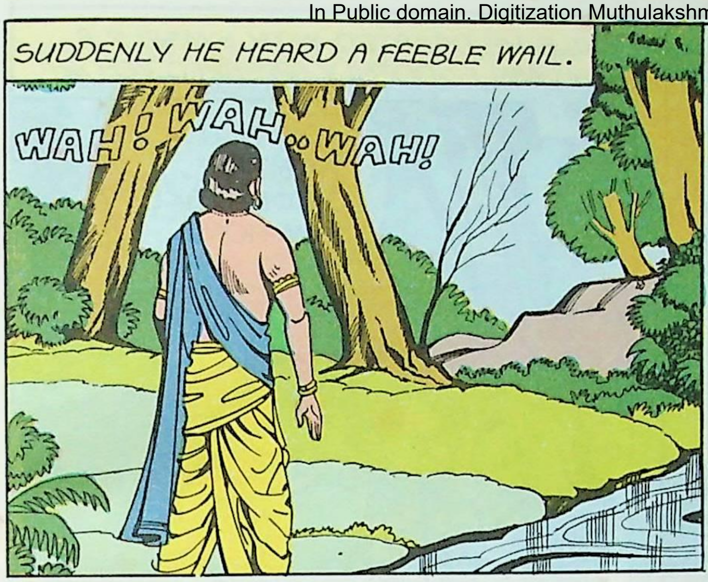

MAHISHI BEGAN TAUNTING THE DEVAS.
TO WHOM WILL YOU TURN NOW? SHIVA AND VISHNU ARE POWERLESS AGAINST ME.
SHIVA WATCHED AND HEARD ALL.
I MUST PUT AN END TO MAHISHI'S ARROGANCE.
HE WENT TO VISHNU WHO WAS IN THE FORM OF MOHINI, THE ENCHANTRESS.
WE MUST CREATE A SON WHO WILL DESTROY MAHISHI.
WHO WILL REAR THE BABY?
MY DEVOTEES – RAJASHEKHARA AND HIS QUEEN. THEY LONG FOR A CHILD.
I WILL TAKE HIM THERE!


AS SOON AS THE INFANT WAS CREATED—
I WILL TIE THIS GOLD BELL AROUND HIS NECK BEFORE I TAKE HIM TO EARTH.

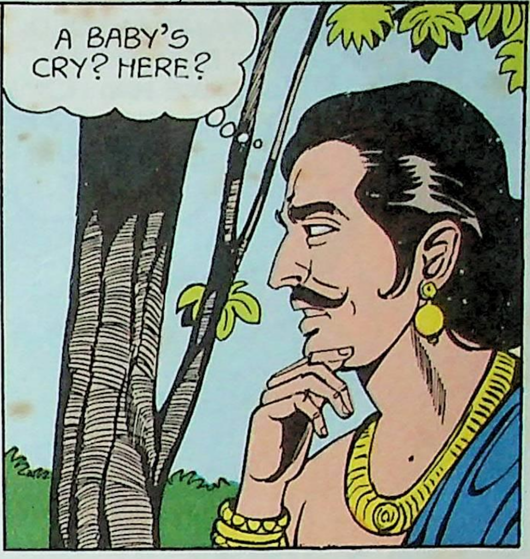

MEANWHILE, ON EARTH, RAJASHEKHARA WAS OUT HUNTING WITH HIS RETINUE.


AFTER A TIRING DAY WHILE THE PARTY RELAXED ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER PAMPA...

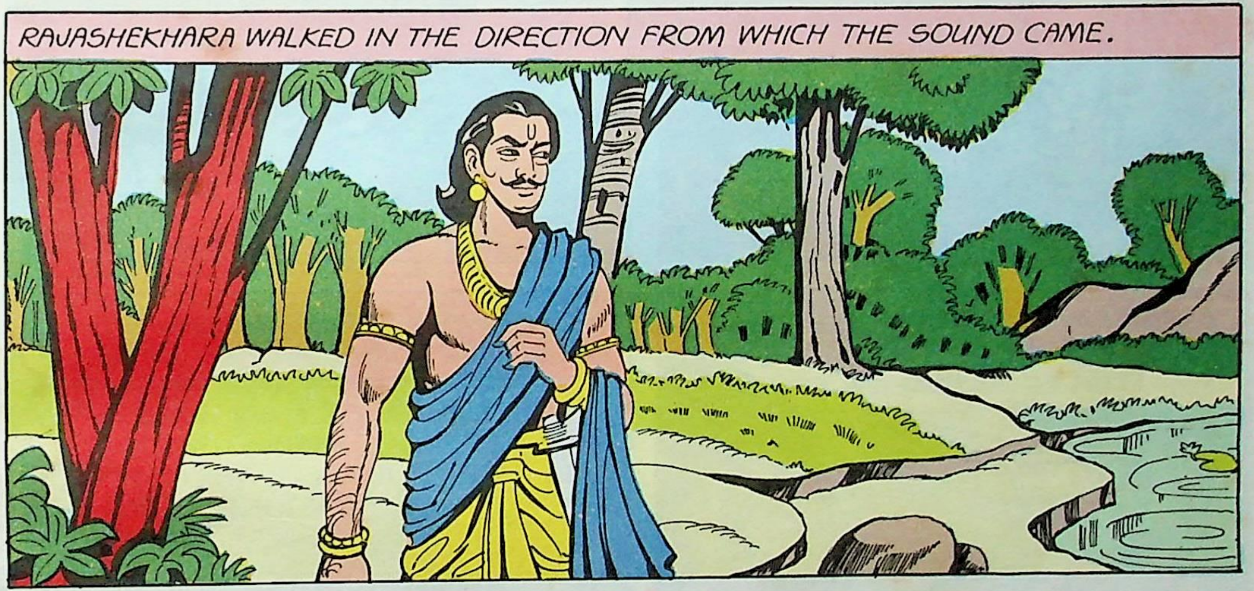

...RAJASHEKHARA WANDERED OFF ALONE.
HOW PEACEFUL AND QUIET IT IS HERE.



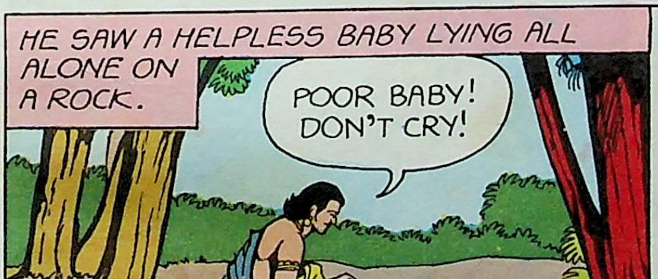
SUDDENLY HE HEARD A FEEBLE WAIL.



A BABY'S CRY? HERE?

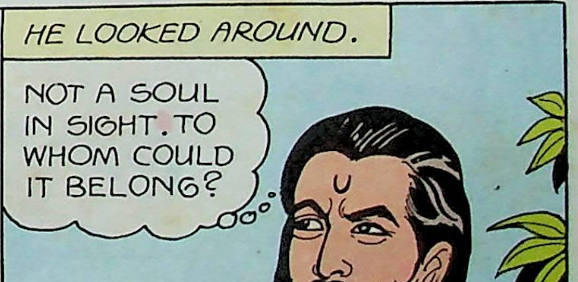


RAJASHEKHARA WALKED IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE SOUND CAME.



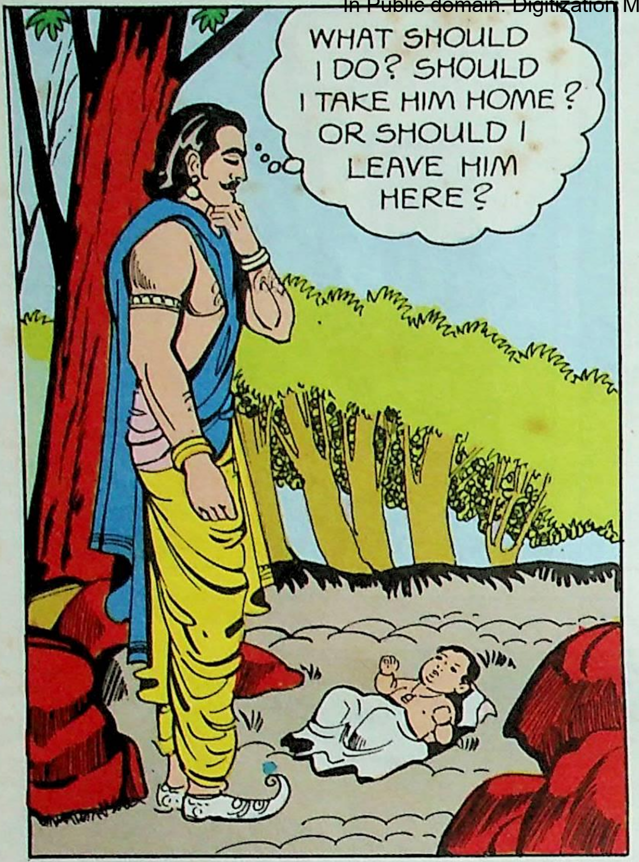
HE SAW A HELPLESS BABY LYING ALL ALONE ON A ROCK.

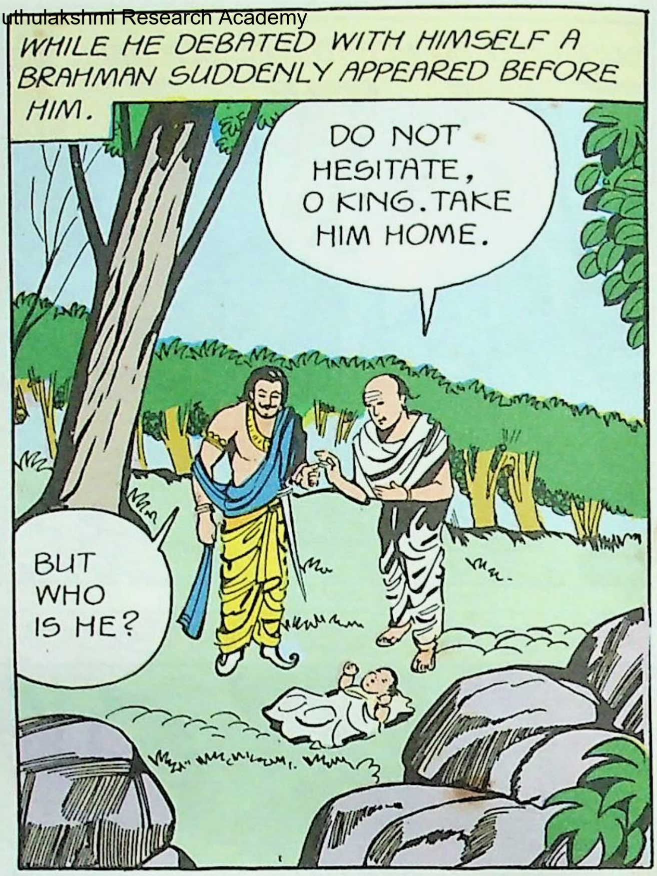
POOR BABY! DON'T CRY!

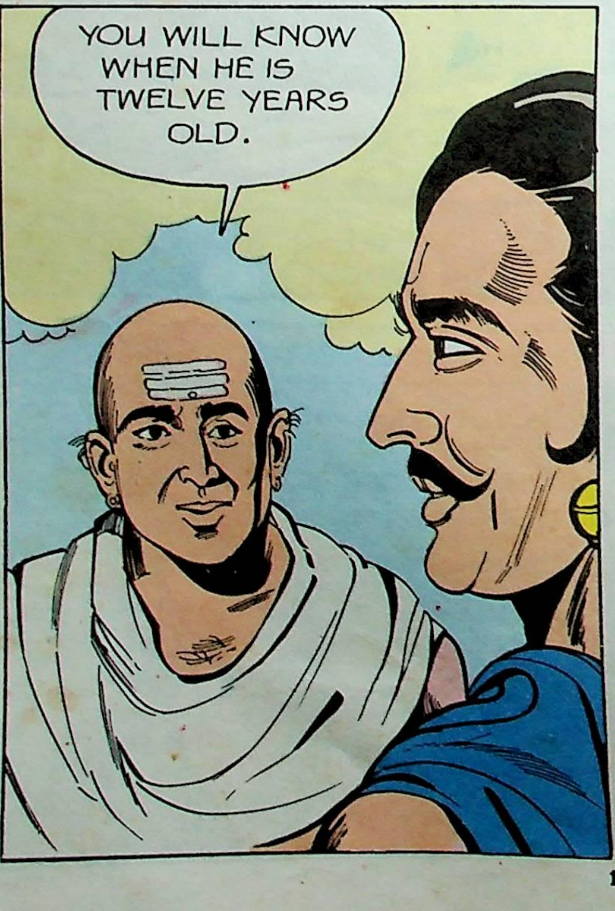


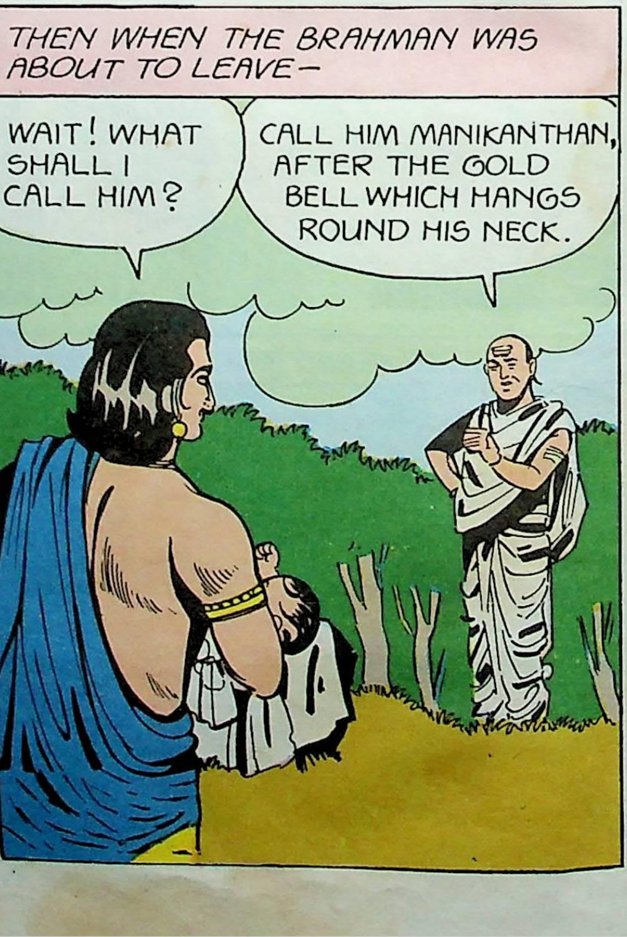
HE LOOKED AROUND.

NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT. TO WHOM COULD IT BELONG?

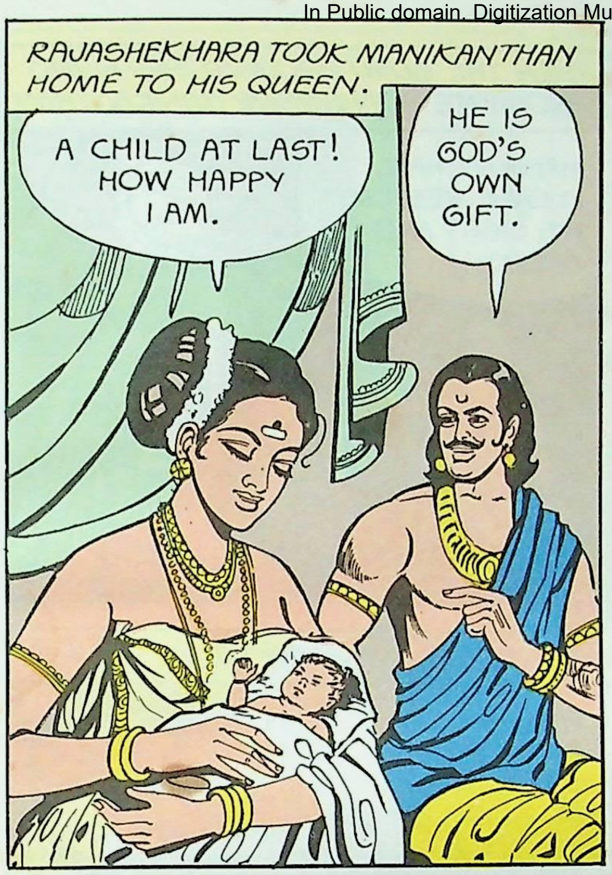

WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHOULD I TAKE HIM HOME? OR SHOULD I LEAVE HIM HERE?


WHILE HE DEBATED WITH HIMSELF A BRAHMAN SUDDENLY APPEARED BEFORE HIM.
DO NOT HESITATE, O KING. TAKE HIM HOME.
BUT WHO IS HE?

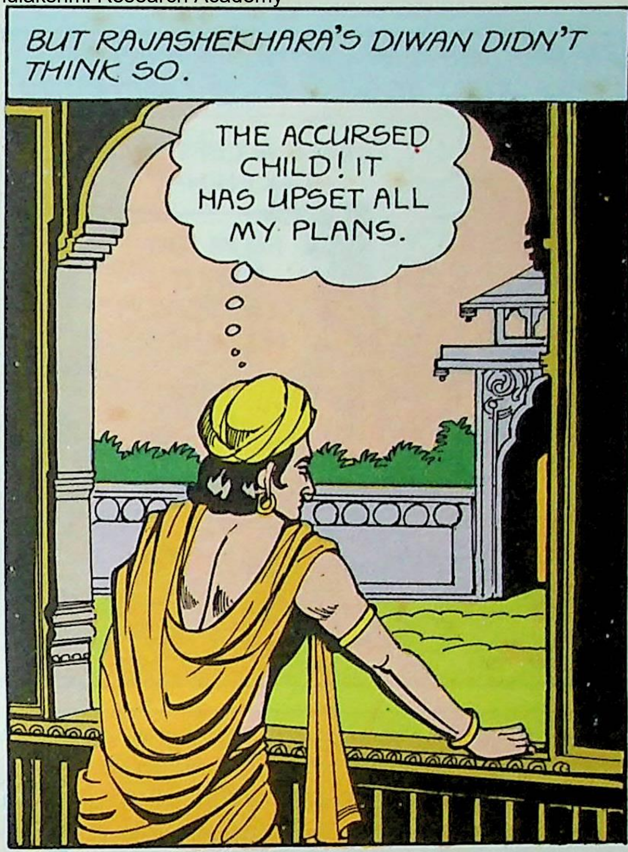

YOU WILL KNOW WHEN HE IS TWELVE YEARS OLD.


THEN WHEN THE BRAHMAN WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE–
WAIT! WHAT SHALL I CALL HIM?
CALL HIM MANIKANTHAN, AFTER THE GOLD BELL WHICH HANGS ROUND HIS NECK.

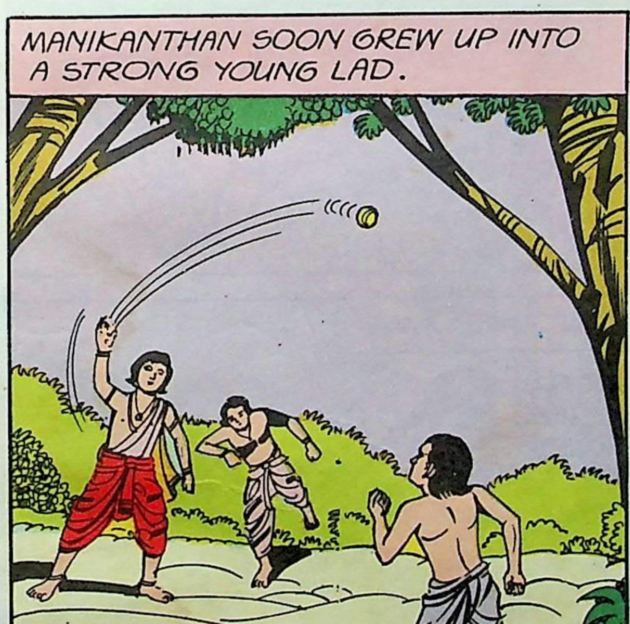
RAJASHEKHARA TOOK MANIKANTHAN HOME TO HIS QUEEN.


A CHILD AT LAST! HOW HAPPY I AM.
HE IS GOD'S OWN GIFT.

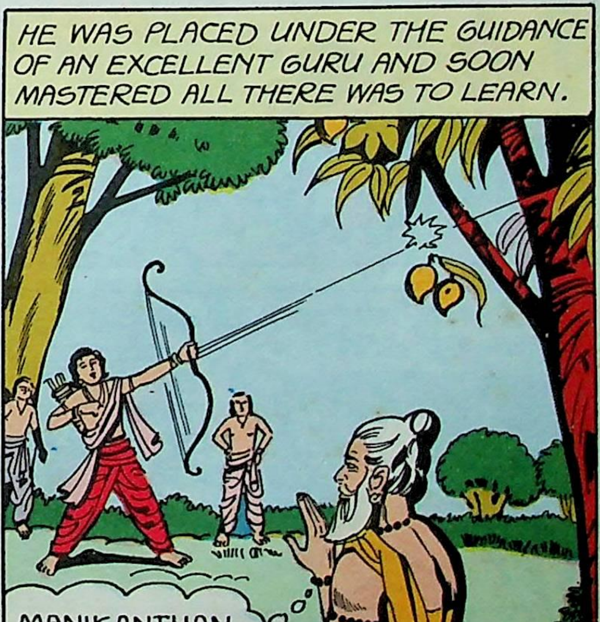
BUT RAJASHEKHARA'S DIWAN DIDN'T THINK SO.


THE ACCURSED CHILD! IT HAS UPSET ALL MY PLANS.

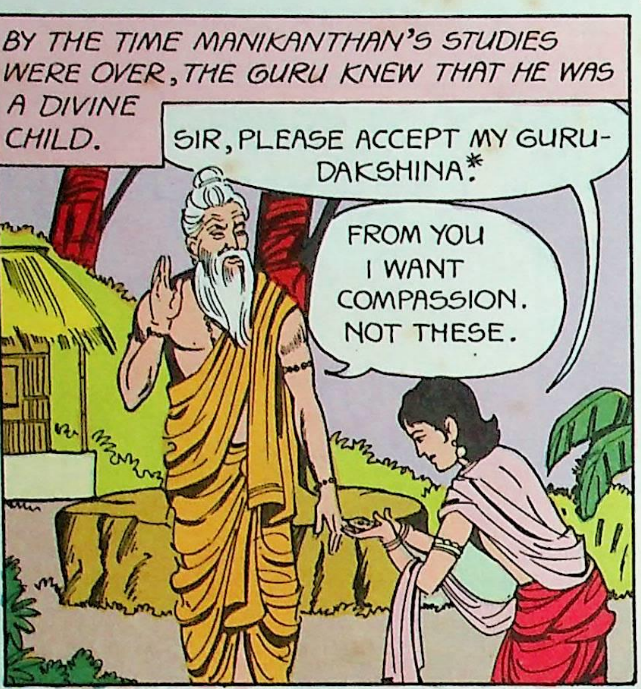
MANIKANTHAN SOON GREW UP INTO A STRONG YOUNG LAD.



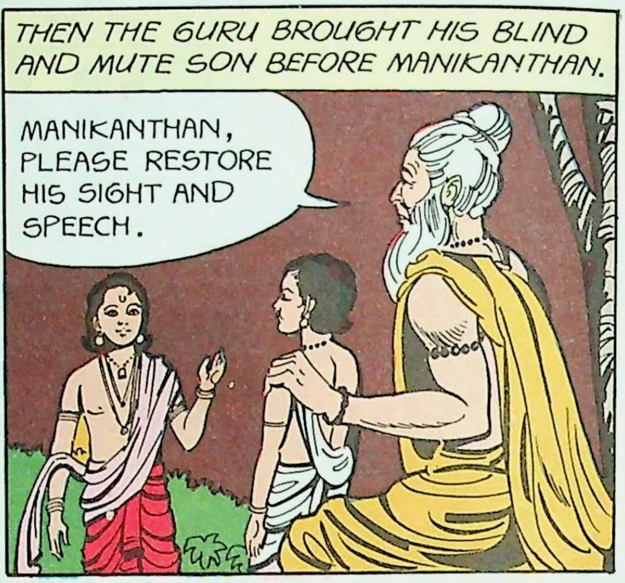
HE WAS PLACED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF AN EXCELLENT GURU AND SOON MASTERED ALL THERE WAS TO LEARN.


MANIKANTHAN IS NOT AN ORDINARY CHILD.

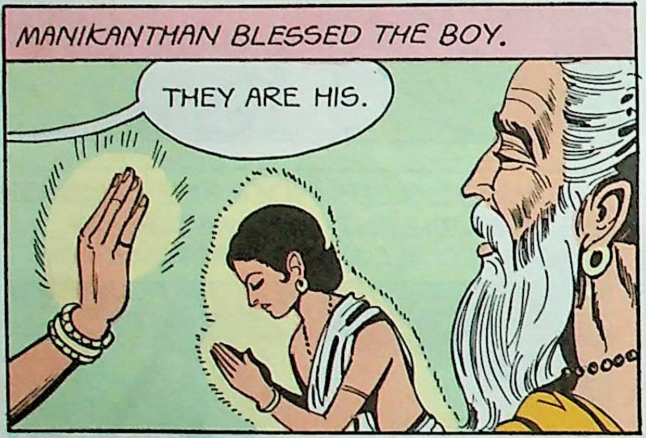
BY THE TIME MANIKANTHAN'S STUDIES WERE OVER, THE GURU KNEW THAT HE WAS A DIVINE CHILD.


SIR, PLEASE ACCEPT MY GURU-DAKSHINA.*
FROM YOU I WANT COMPASSION. NOT THESE.

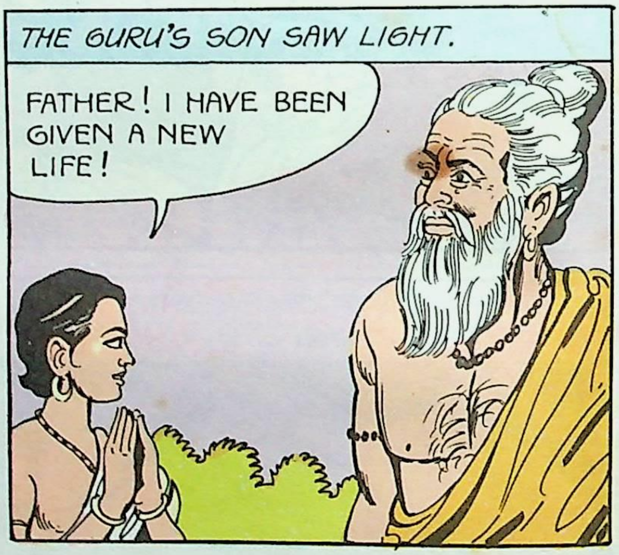
THEN THE GURU BROUGHT HIS BLIND AND MUTE SON BEFORE MANIKANTHAN.


MANIKANTHAN, PLEASE RESTORE HIS SIGHT AND SPEECH.

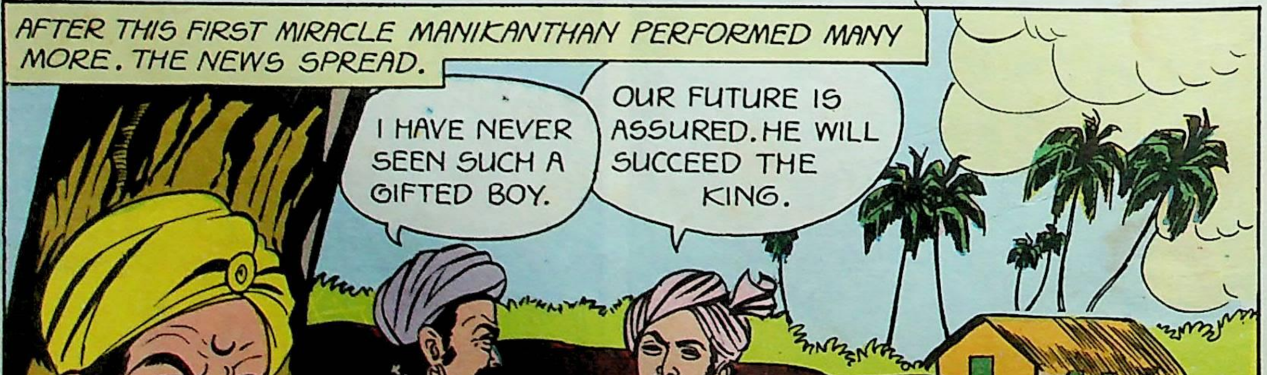
MANIKANTHAN BLESSED THE BOY.


THEY ARE HIS.

THE GURU'S SON SAW LIGHT.


FATHER! I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A NEW LIFE!

AFTER THIS FIRST MIRACLE MANIKANTHAN PERFORMED MANY MORE. THE NEWS SPREAD.


I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A GIFTED BOY.
OUR FUTURE IS ASSURED. HE WILL SUCCEED THE KING.

THE DIWAN, WHO OVERHEARD THESE COMMENTS...

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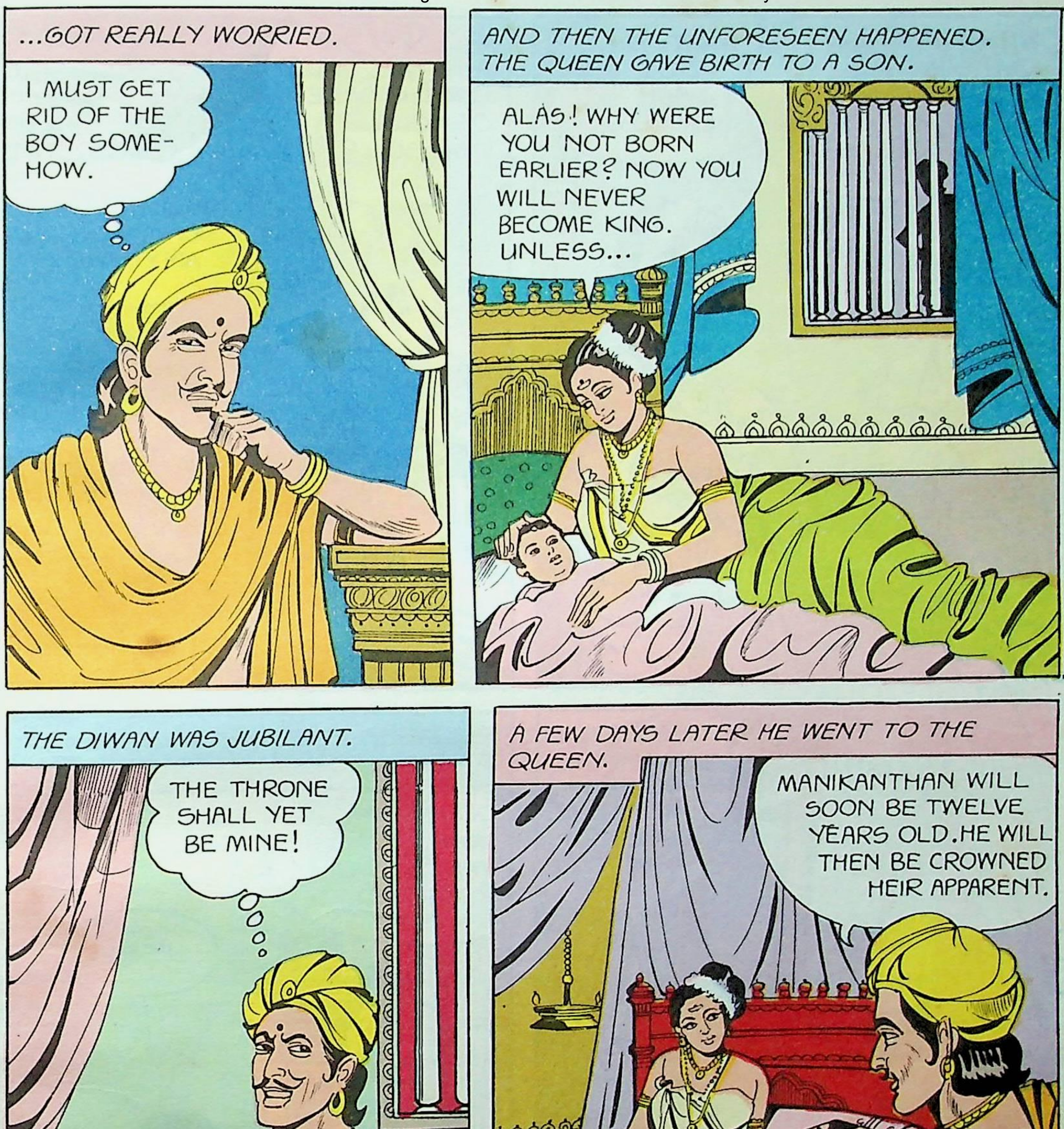
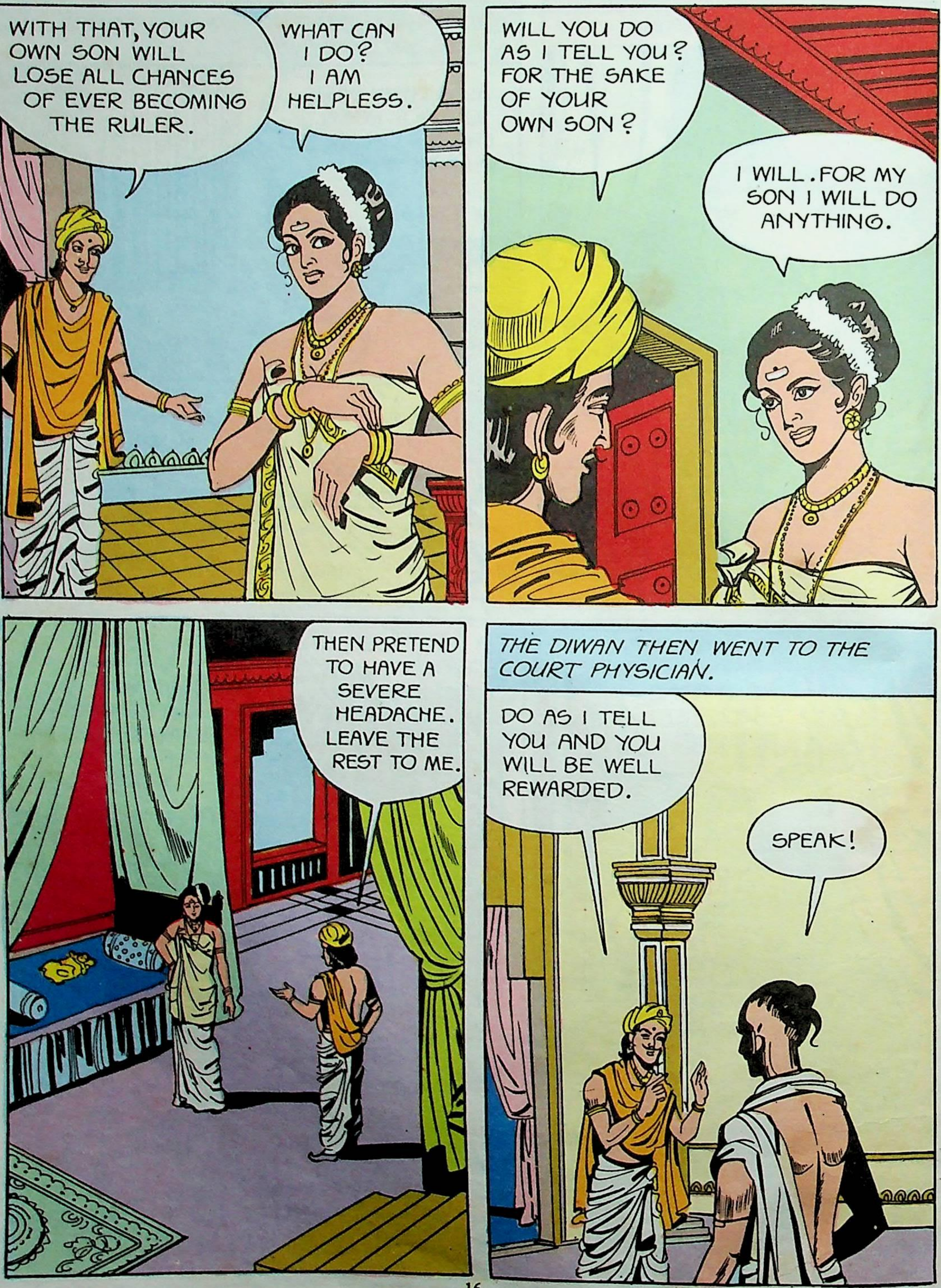
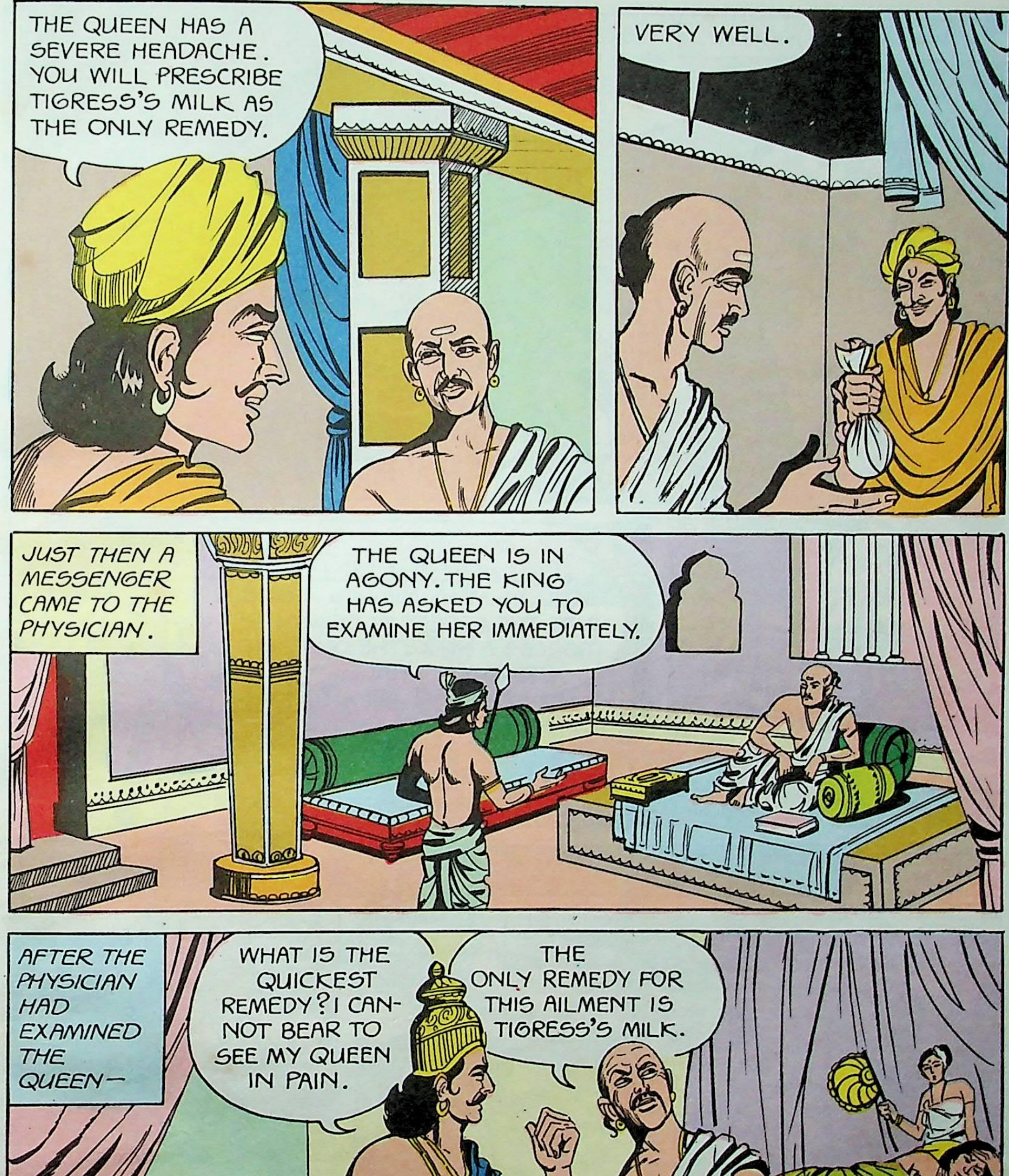
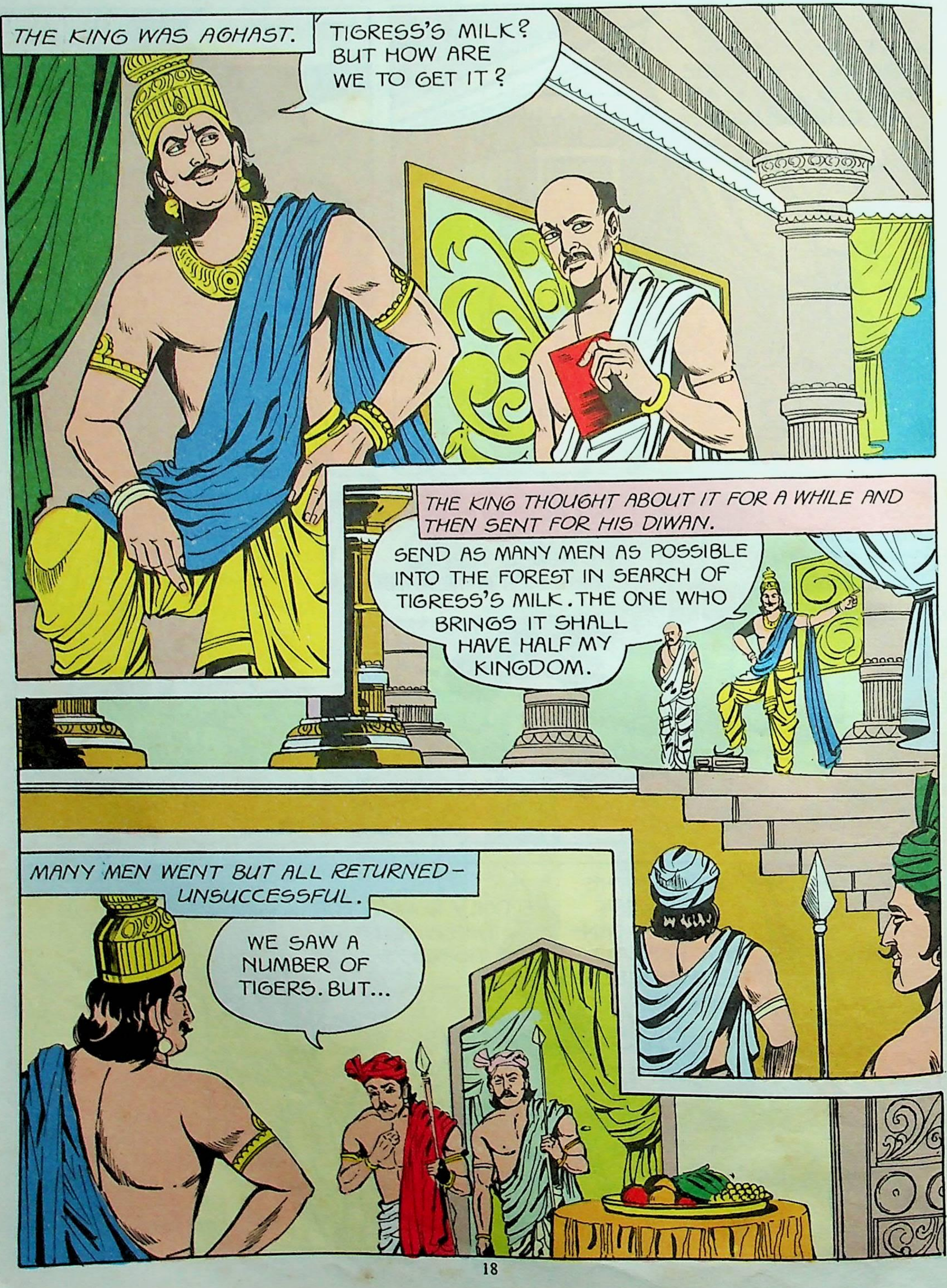
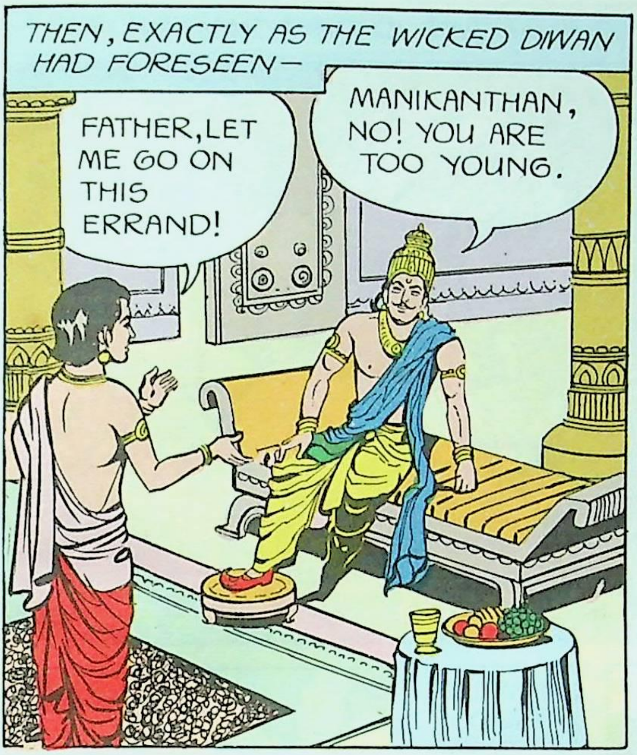
* THE TRADITIONAL TRIBUTE GIVEN BY A DISCIPLE TO HIS TEACHER

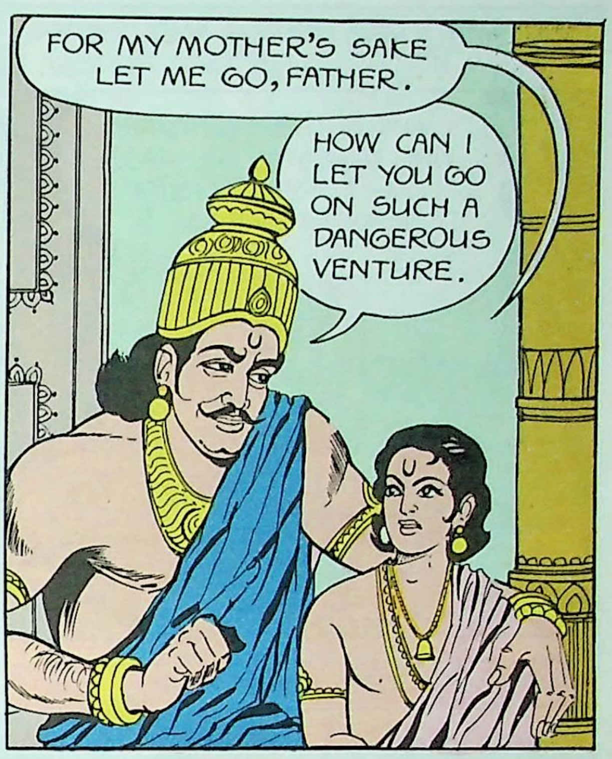

...GOT REALLY WORRIED.
I MUST GET RID OF THE BOY SOMEHOW.
AND THEN THE UNFORESEEN HAPPENED. THE QUEEN GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.
ALAS! WHY WERE YOU NOT BORN EARLIER? NOW YOU WILL NEVER BECOME KING. UNLESS...
THE DIWAN WAS JUBILANT.
THE THRONE SHALL YET BE MINE!
A FEW DAYS LATER HE WENT TO THE QUEEN.
MANIKANTHAN WILL SOON BE TWELVE YEARS OLD. HE WILL THEN BE CROWNED HEIR APPARENT.

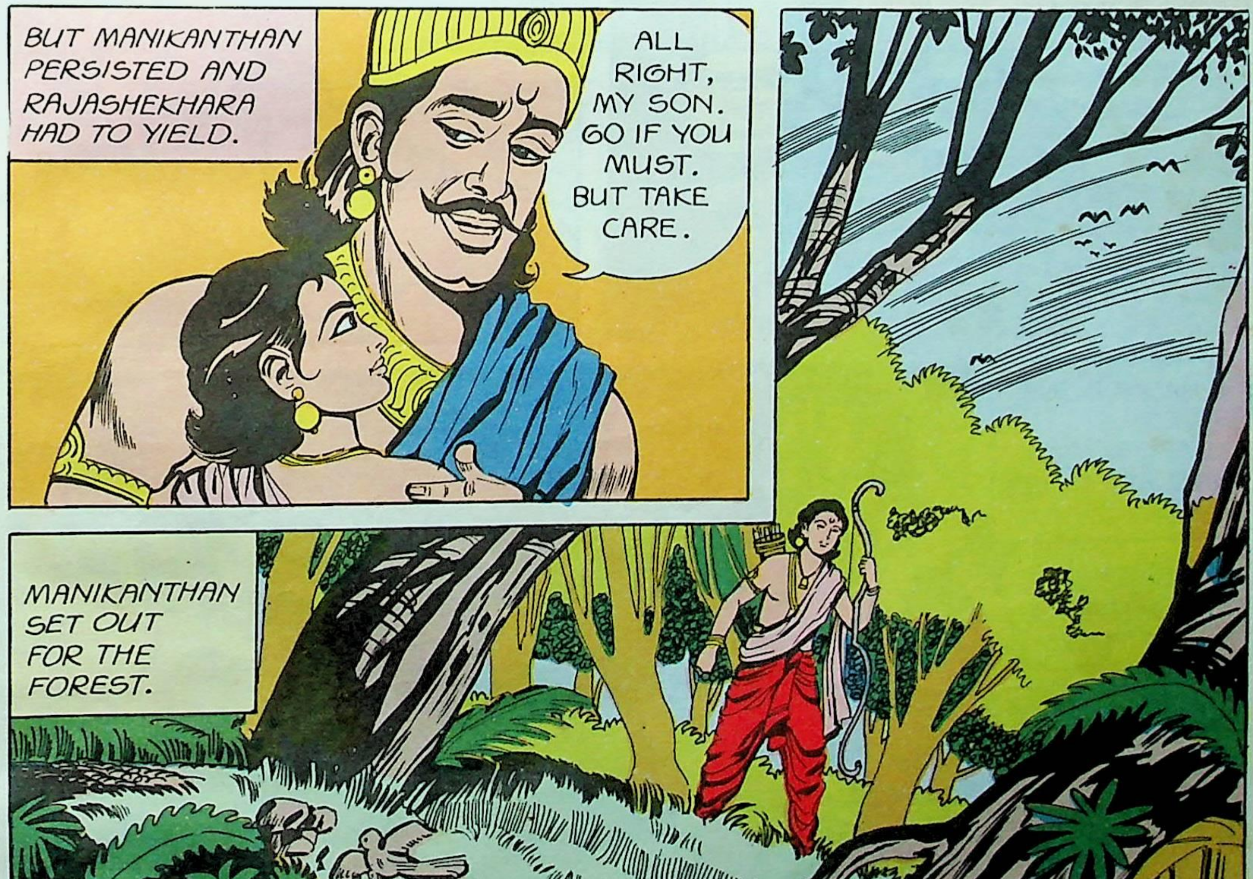

WITH THAT, YOUR OWN SON WILL LOSE ALL CHANCES OF EVER BECOMING THE RULER.
WHAT CAN I DO? I AM HELPLESS.
WILL YOU DO AS I TELL YOU? FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR OWN SON?
I WILL. FOR MY SON I WILL DO ANYTHING.
THEN PRETEND TO HAVE A SEVERE HEADACHE. LEAVE THE REST TO ME.
THE DIWAN THEN WENT TO THE COURT PHYSICIAN.
DO AS I TELL YOU AND YOU WILL BE WELL REWARDED.
SPEAK!

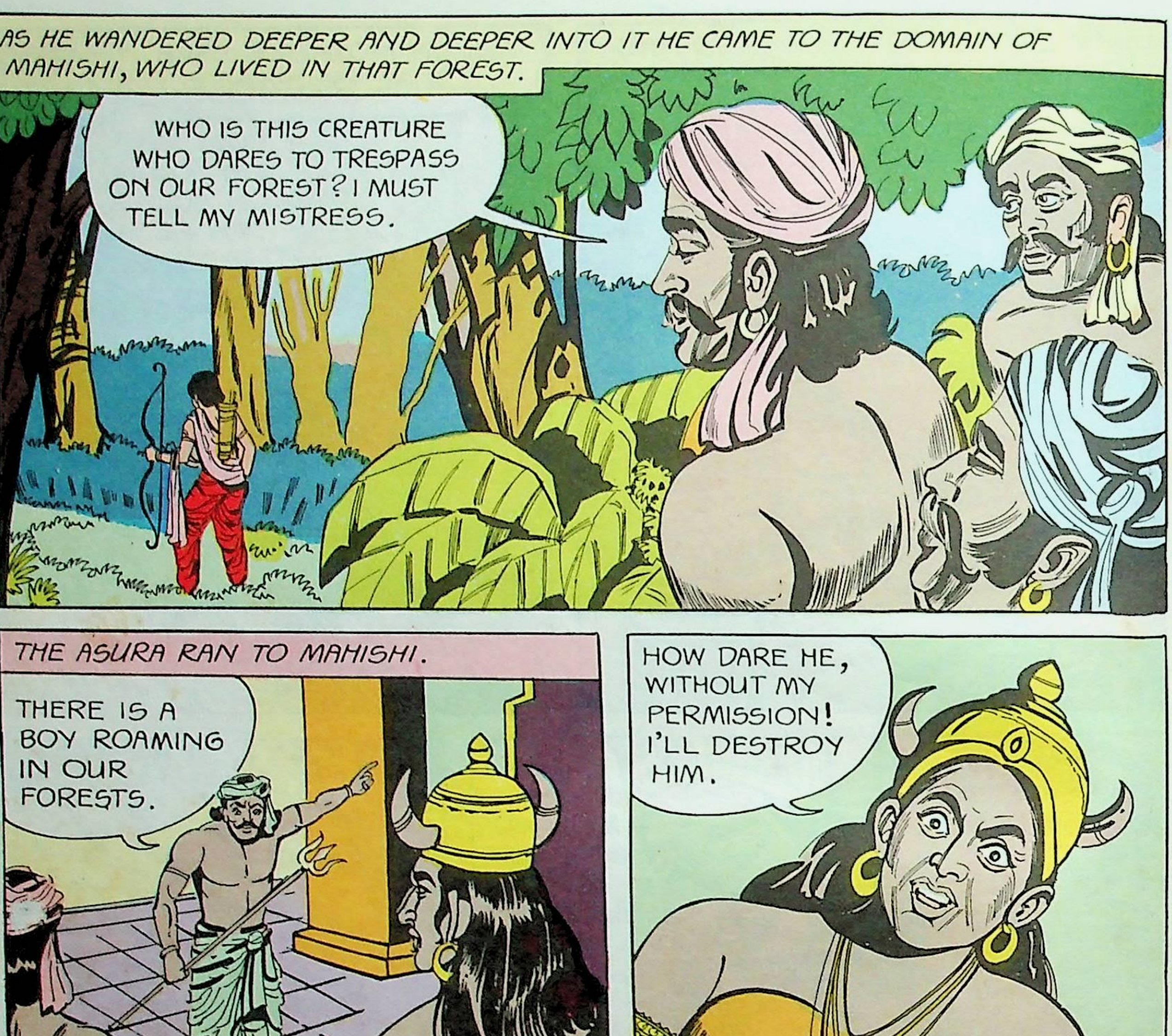

THE QUEEN HAS A SEVERE HEADACHE. YOU WILL PRESCRIBE TIGRESS'S MILK AS THE ONLY REMEDY.
VERY WELL.
JUST THEN A MESSENGER CAME TO THE PHYSICIAN.
THE QUEEN IS IN AGONY. THE KING HAS ASKED YOU TO EXAMINE HER IMMEDIATELY.
AFTER THE PHYSICIAN HAD EXAMINED THE QUEEN—
WHAT IS THE QUICKEST REMEDY? I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE MY QUEEN IN PAIN.
THE ONLY REMEDY FOR THIS AILMENT IS TIGRESS'S MILK.


THE KING WAS AGHAST.
TIGRESS'S MILK? BUT HOW ARE WE TO GET IT?
THE KING THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE AND THEN SENT FOR HIS DIWAN.
SEND AS MANY MEN AS POSSIBLE INTO THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF TIGRESS'S MILK. THE ONE WHO BRINGS IT SHALL HAVE HALF MY KINGDOM.
MANY MEN WENT BUT ALL RETURNED- UNSUCCESSFUL.
WE SAW A NUMBER OF TIGERS. BUT...

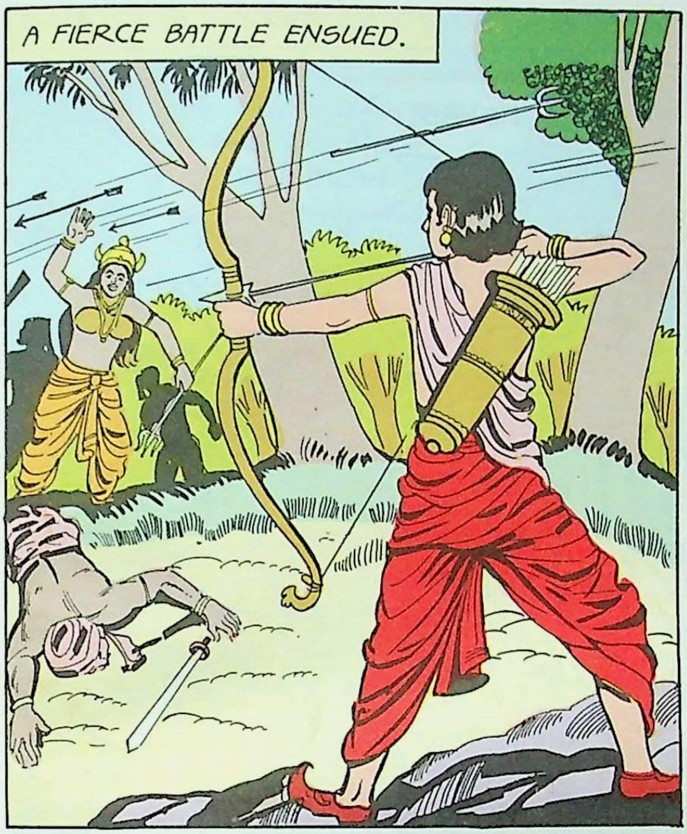

THEN, EXACTLY AS THE WICKED DIWAN HAD FORESEEN—
FATHER, LET ME GO ON THIS ERRAND!
MANIKANTHAN, NO! YOU ARE TOO YOUNG.

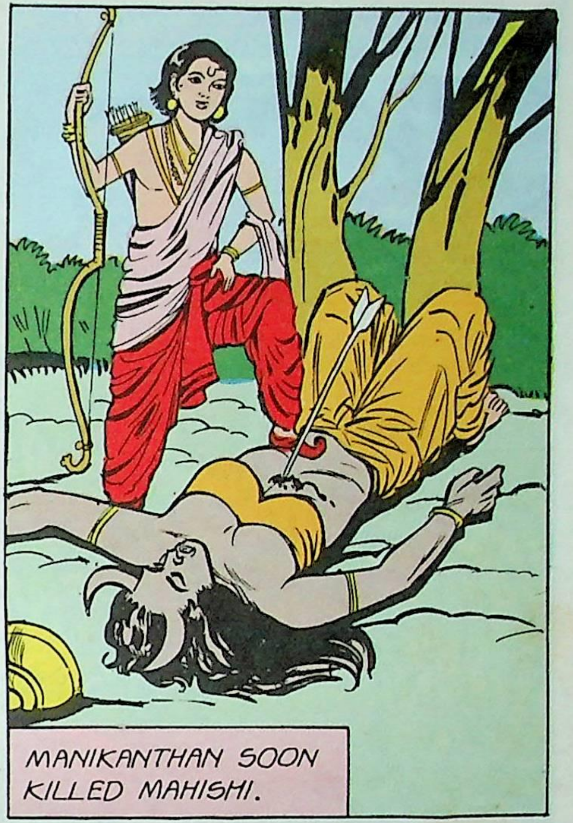

FOR MY MOTHER'S SAKE LET ME GO, FATHER.
HOW CAN I LET YOU GO ON SUCH A DANGEROUS VENTURE.


BUT MANIKANTHAN PERSISTED AND RAJASHEKHARA HAD TO YIELD.
ALL RIGHT, MY SON. GO IF YOU MUST. BUT TAKE CARE.
MANIKANTHAN SET OUT FOR THE FOREST.


AS HE WANDERED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO IT HE CAME TO THE DOMAIN OF MAHISHI, WHO LIVED IN THAT FOREST.
WHO IS THIS CREATURE WHO DARES TO TRESPASS ON OUR FOREST? I MUST TELL MY MISTRESS.
THE ASURA RAN TO MAHISHI.
THERE IS A BOY ROAMING IN OUR FORESTS.
HOW DARE HE, WITHOUT MY PERMISSION! I'LL DESTROY HIM.
MAHISHI WENT UP TO MANIKANTHAN AND ATTACKED HIM.
COME, MAHISHI. MY EARTHLY MISSION IS ABOUT TO BE FULFILLED.

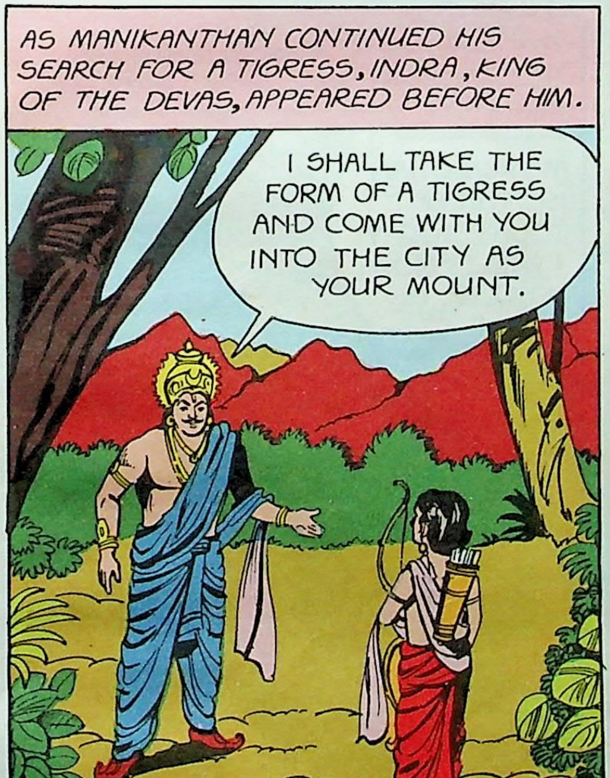
A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED.



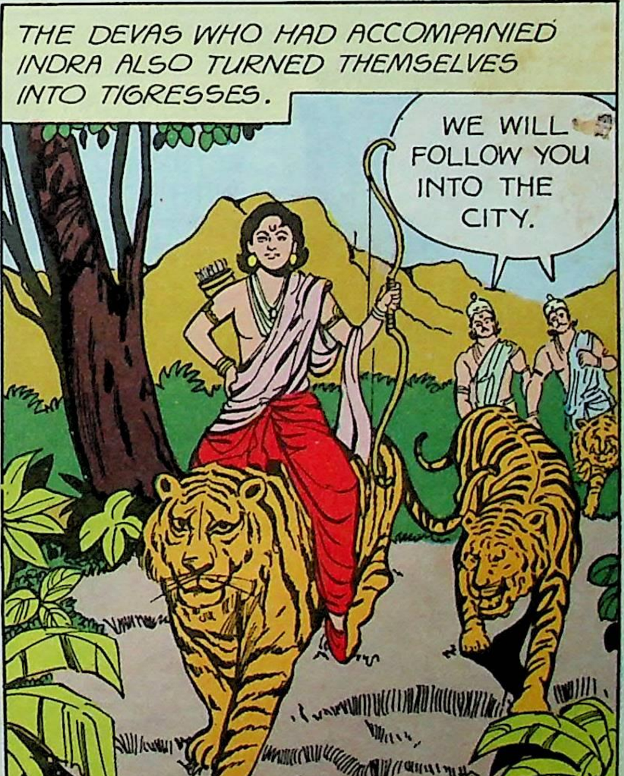


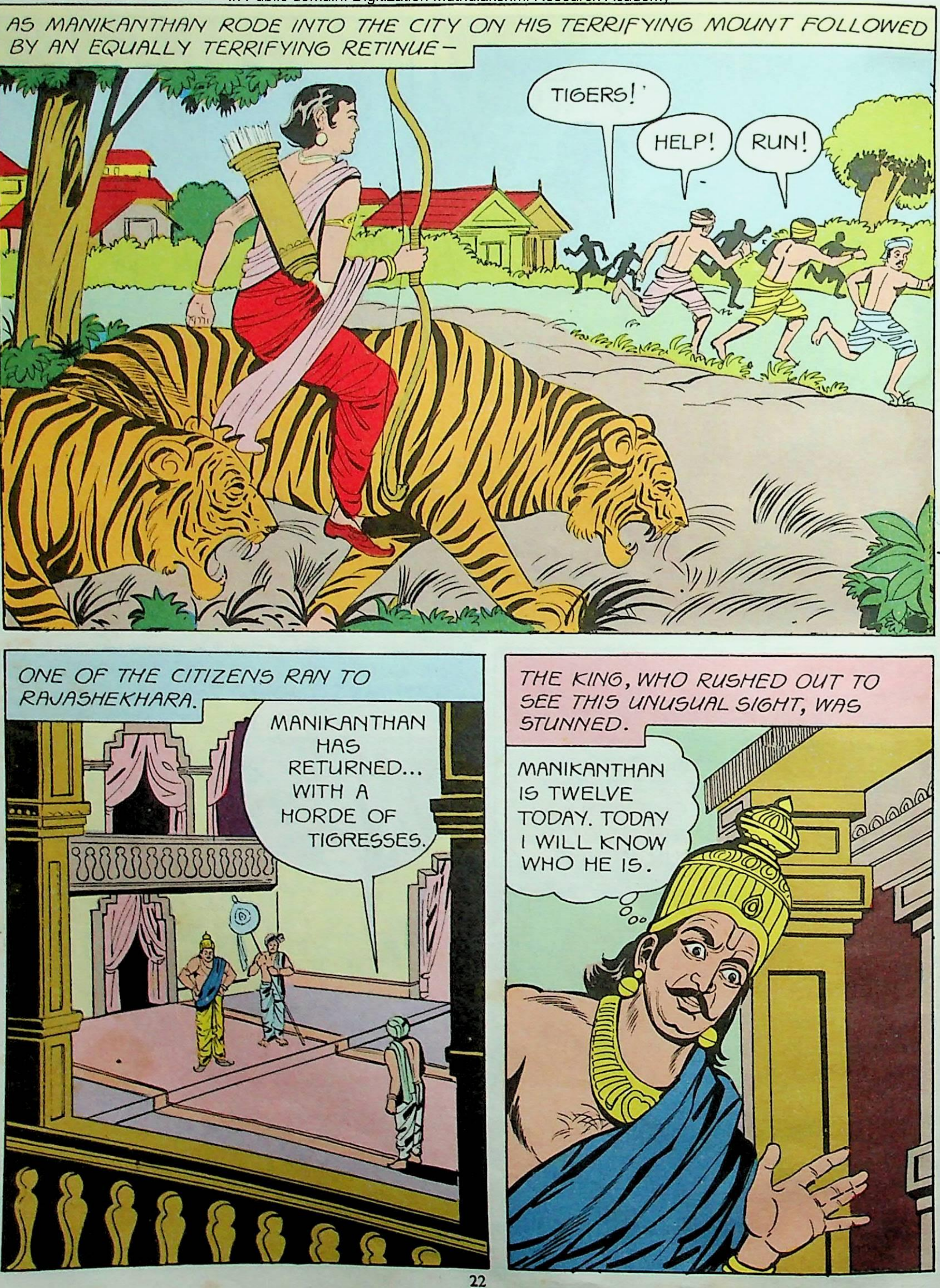
MANIKANTHAN SOON KILLED MAHISHI.

AS MANIKANTHAN CONTINUED HIS SEARCH FOR A TIGRESS, INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS, APPEARED BEFORE HIM.


I SHALL TAKE THE FORM OF A TIGRESS AND COME WITH YOU INTO THE CITY AS YOUR MOUNT.

THE DEVAS WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED INDRA ALSO TURNED THEMSELVES INTO TIGRESSES.


WE WILL FOLLOW YOU INTO THE CITY.



AS MANIKANTHAN RODE INTO THE CITY ON HIS TERRIFYING MOUNT FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY TERRIFYING RETINUE–

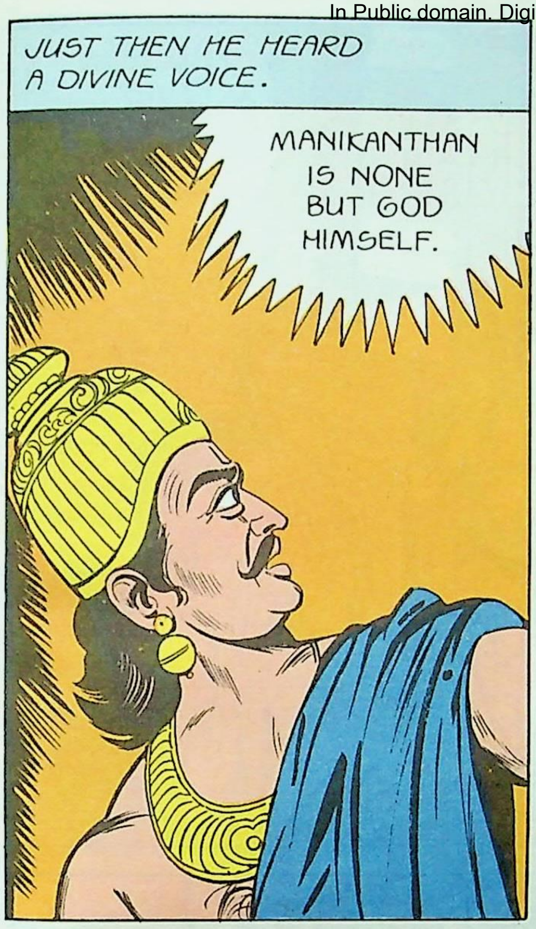
TIGERS!
HELP!
RUN!

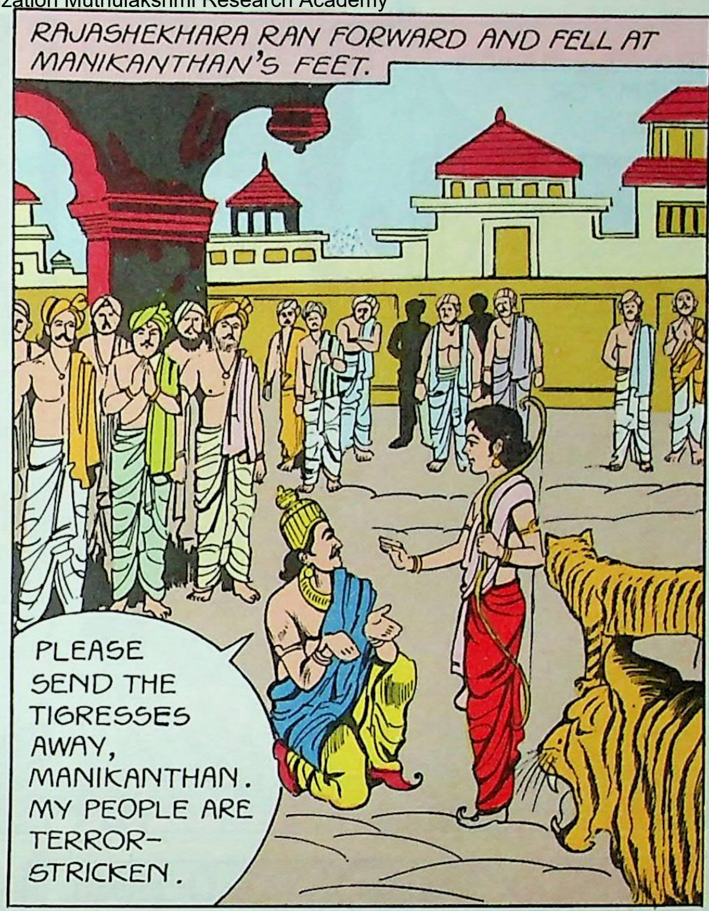
ONE OF THE CITIZENS RAN TO RAJASHEKHARA.

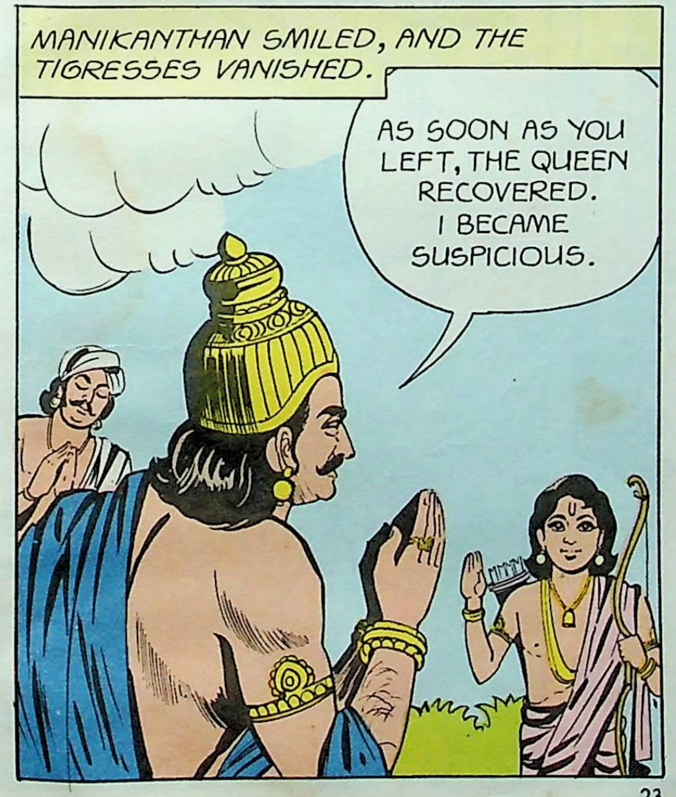
MANIKANTHAN HAS RETURNED... WITH A HORDE OF TIGRESSES.

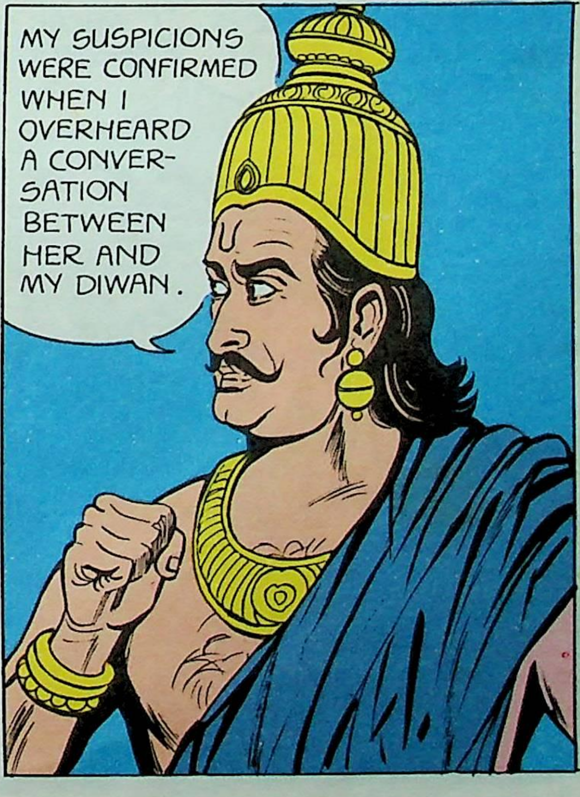
THE KING, WHO RUSHED OUT TO SEE THIS UNUSUAL SIGHT, WAS STUNNED.

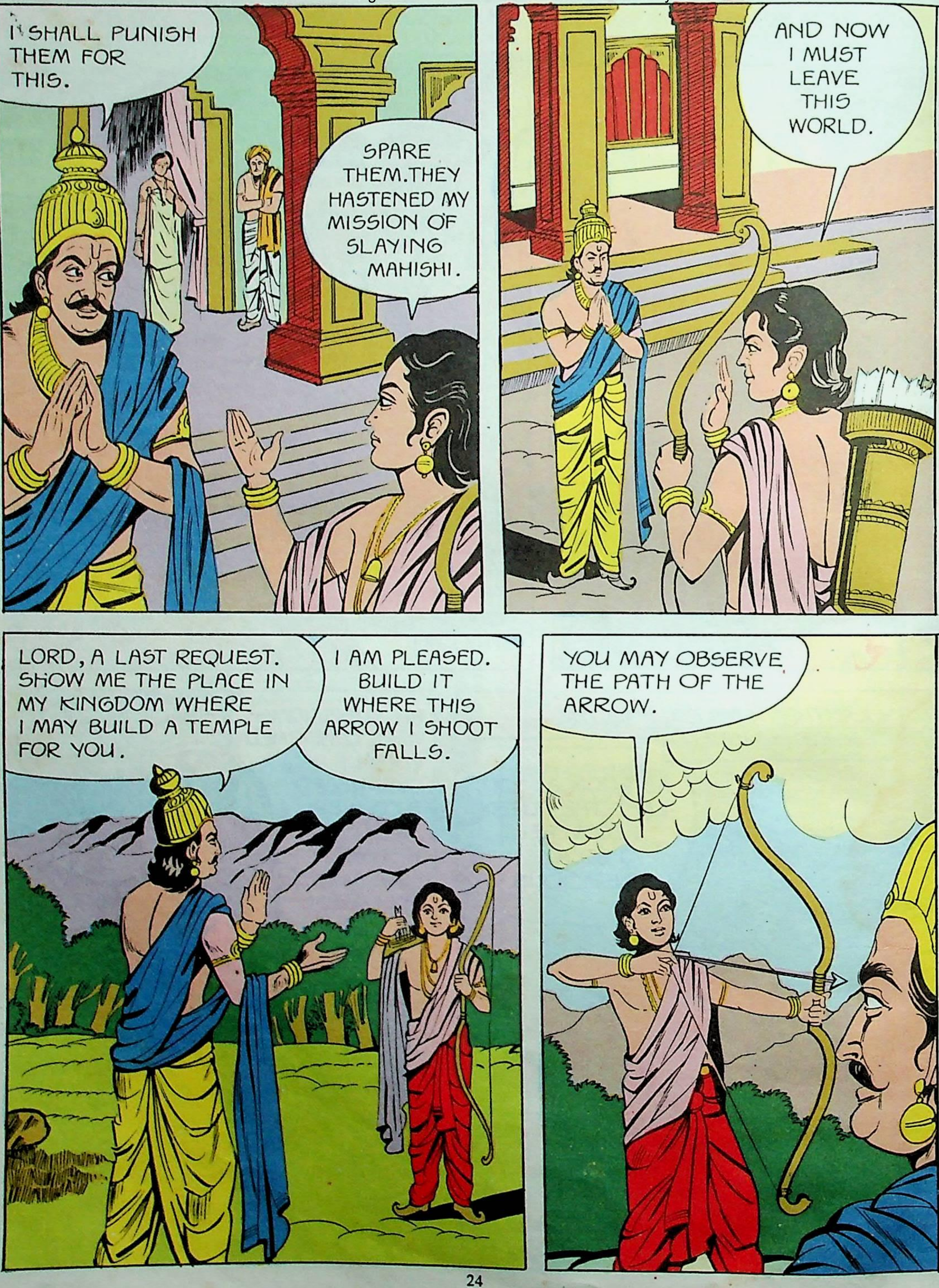
MANIKANTHAN IS TWELVE TODAY. TODAY I WILL KNOW WHO HE IS.

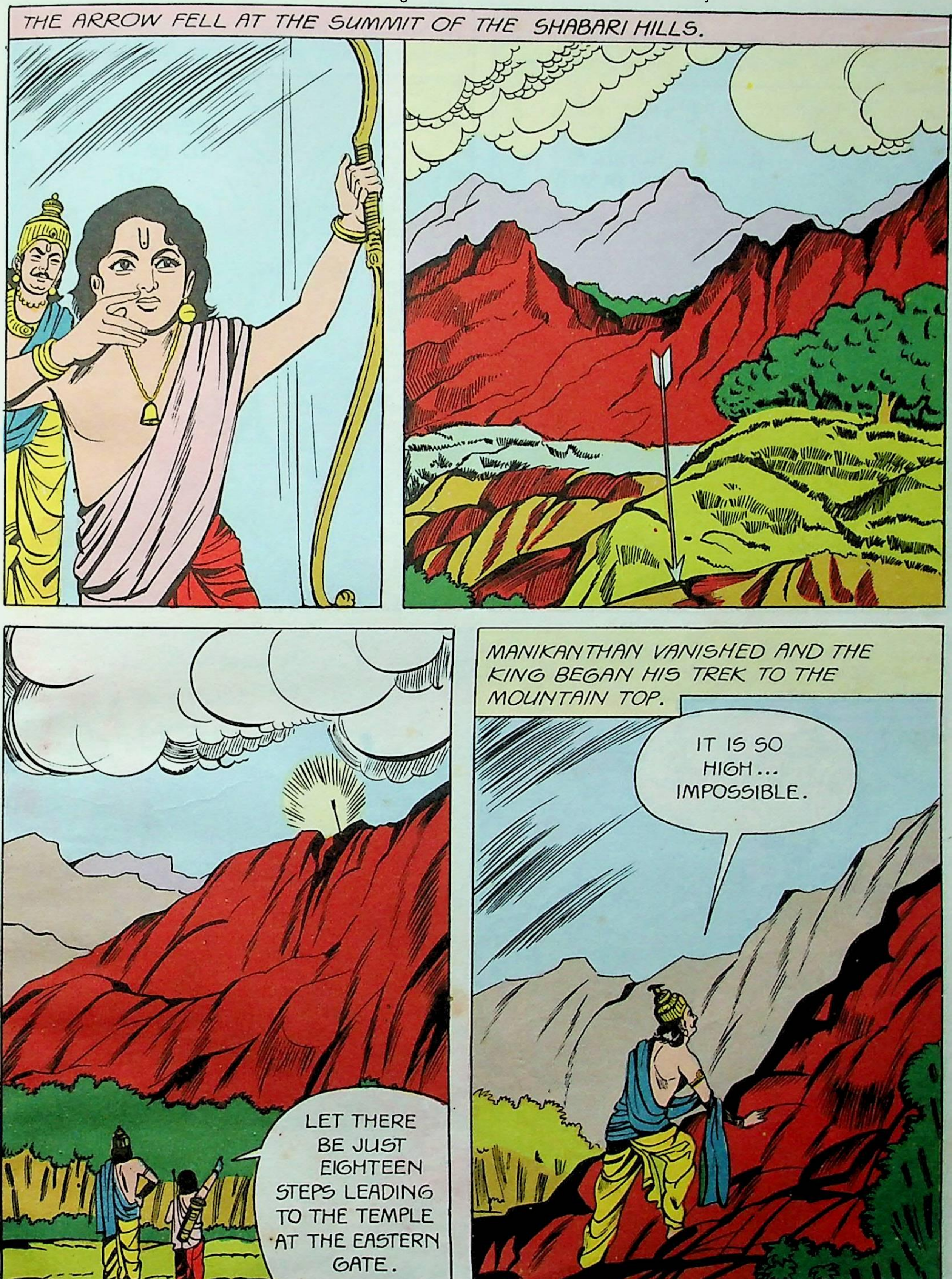

JUST THEN HE HEARD A DIVINE VOICE.
MANIKANTHAN IS NONE BUT GOD HIMSELF.

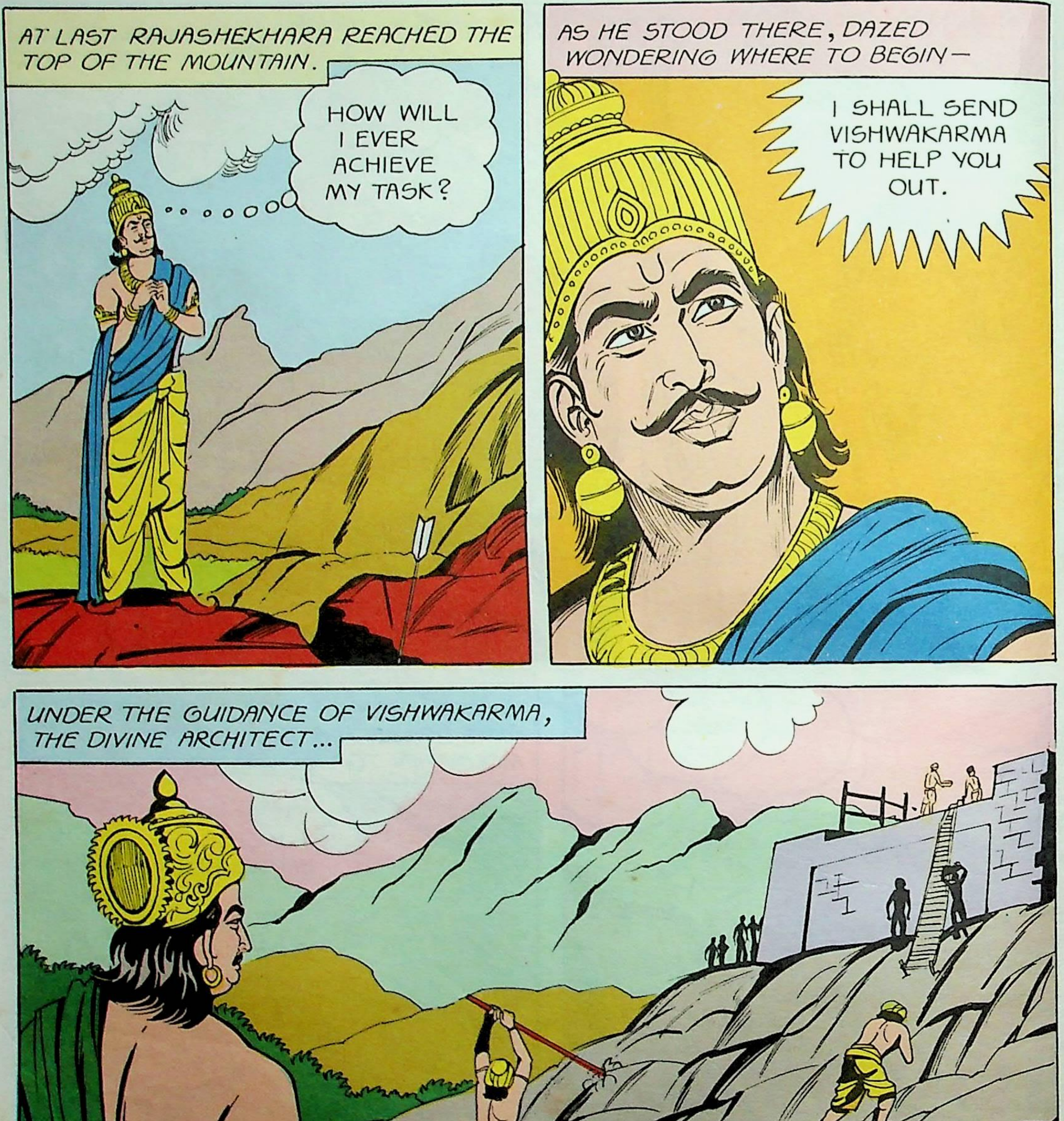

RAJASHEKHARA RAN FORWARD AND FELL AT MANIKANTHAN'S FEET.
PLEASE SEND THE TIGRESSES AWAY, MANIKANTHAN. MY PEOPLE ARE TERROR-STRICKEN.

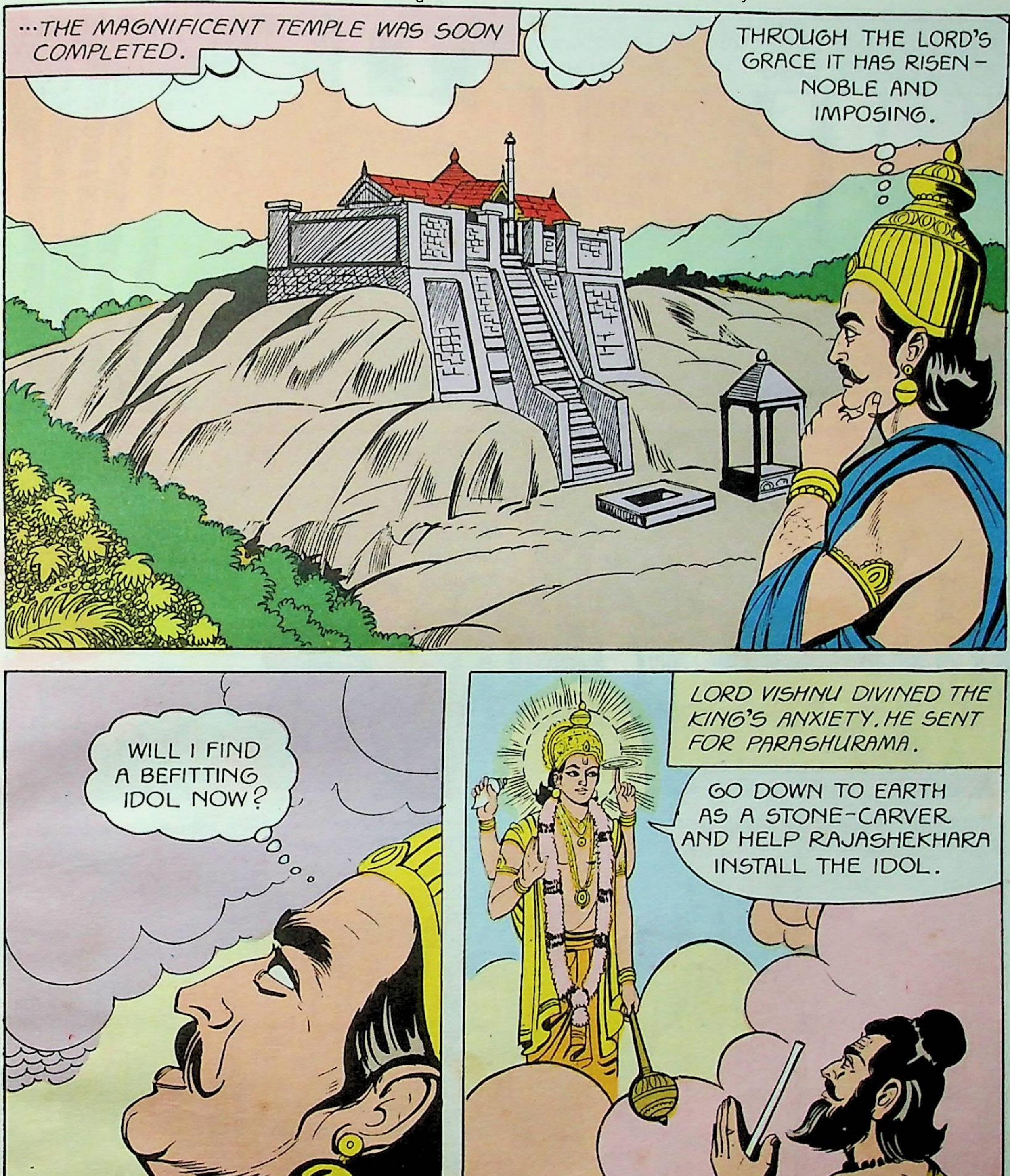

MANIKANTHAN SMILED, AND THE TIGRESSES VANISHED.
AS SOON AS YOU LEFT, THE QUEEN RECOVERED. I BECAME SUSPICIOUS.

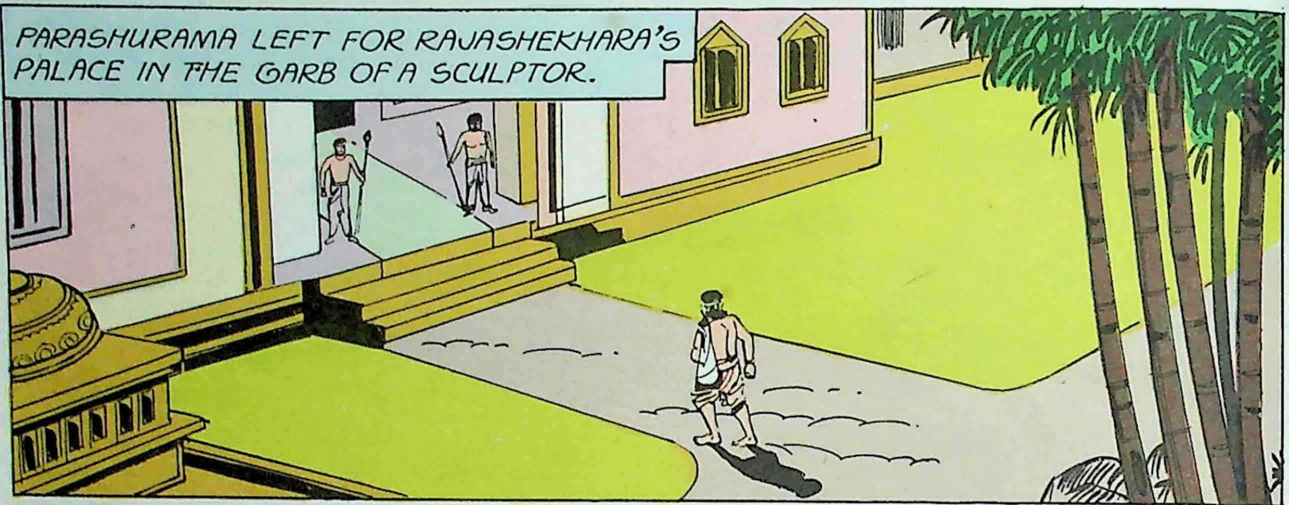

MY SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED WHEN I OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION BETWEEN HER AND MY DIWAN.

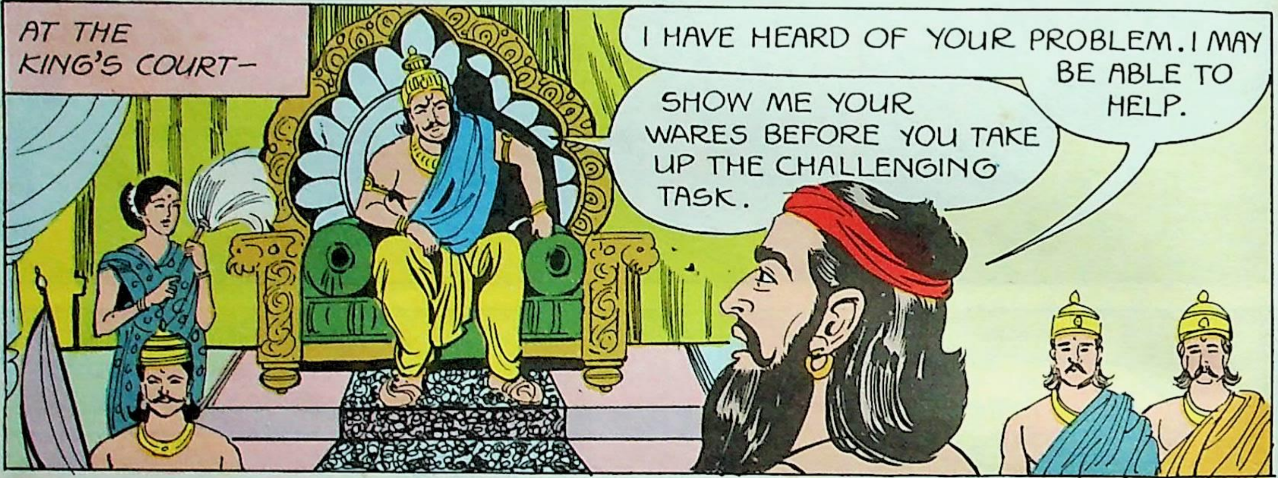

I SHALL PUNISH THEM FOR THIS.
SPARE THEM. THEY HASTENED MY MISSION OF SLAYING MAHISHI.
AND NOW I MUST LEAVE THIS WORLD.
LORD, A LAST REQUEST. SHOW ME THE PLACE IN MY KINGDOM WHERE I MAY BUILD A TEMPLE FOR YOU.
I AM PLEASED. BUILD IT WHERE THIS ARROW I SHOOT FALLS.
YOU MAY OBSERVE THE PATH OF THE ARROW.

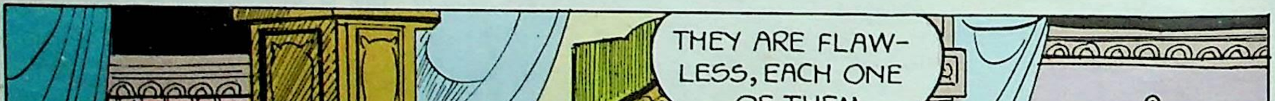

THE ARROW FELL AT THE SUMMIT OF THE SHABARI HILLS.
LET THERE BE JUST EIGHTEEN STEPS LEADING TO THE TEMPLE AT THE EASTERN GATE.
MANIKANTHAN VANISHED AND THE KING BEGAN HIS TREK TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP.
IT IS SO HIGH... IMPOSSIBLE.

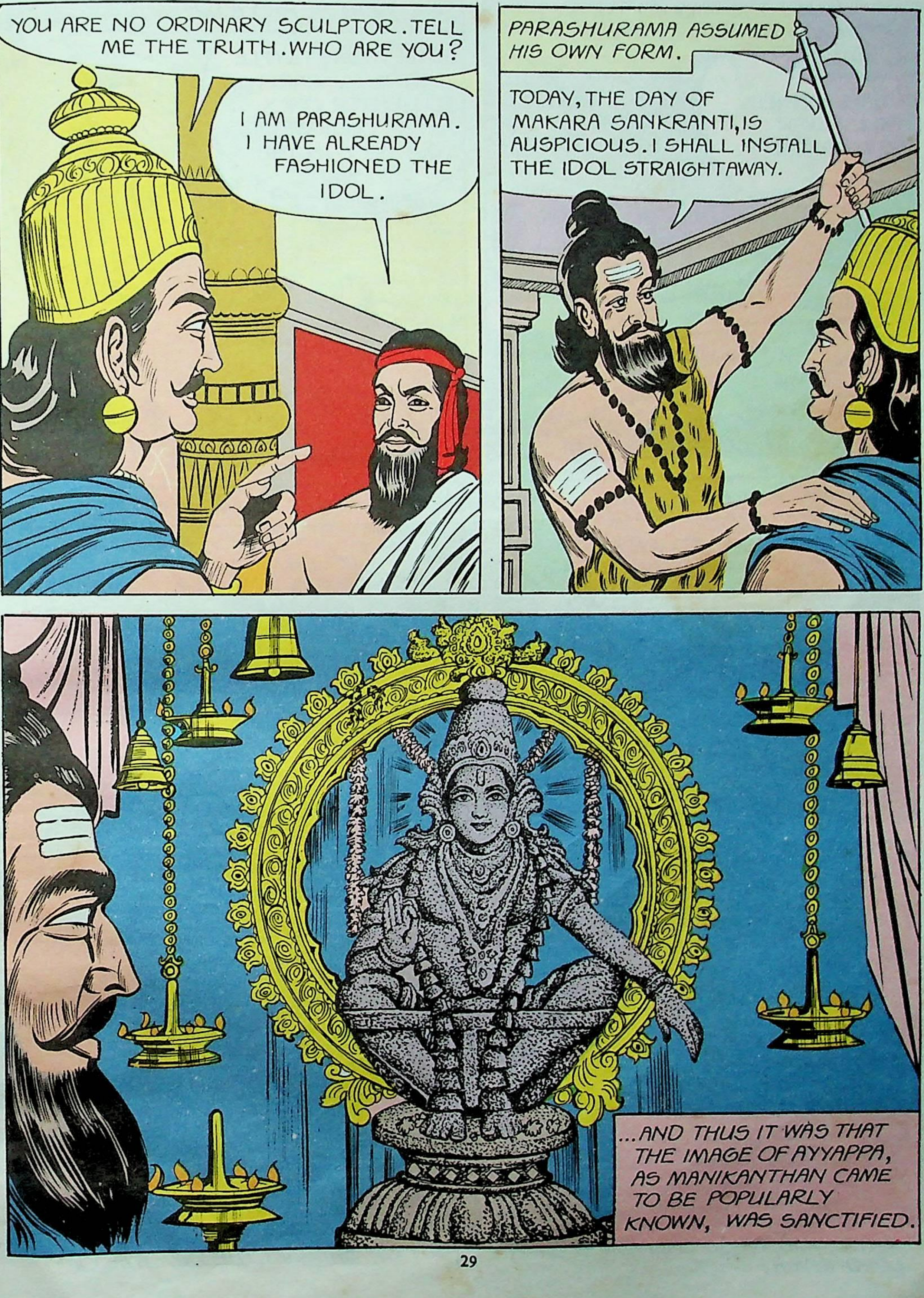

AT LAST RAJASHEKHARA REACHED THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN.
HOW WILL I EVER ACHIEVE MY TASK?
AS HE STOOD THERE, DAZED WONDERING WHERE TO BEGIN—
I SHALL SEND VISHWAKARMA TO HELP YOU OUT.
UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF VISHWAKARMA, THE DIVINE ARCHITECT...

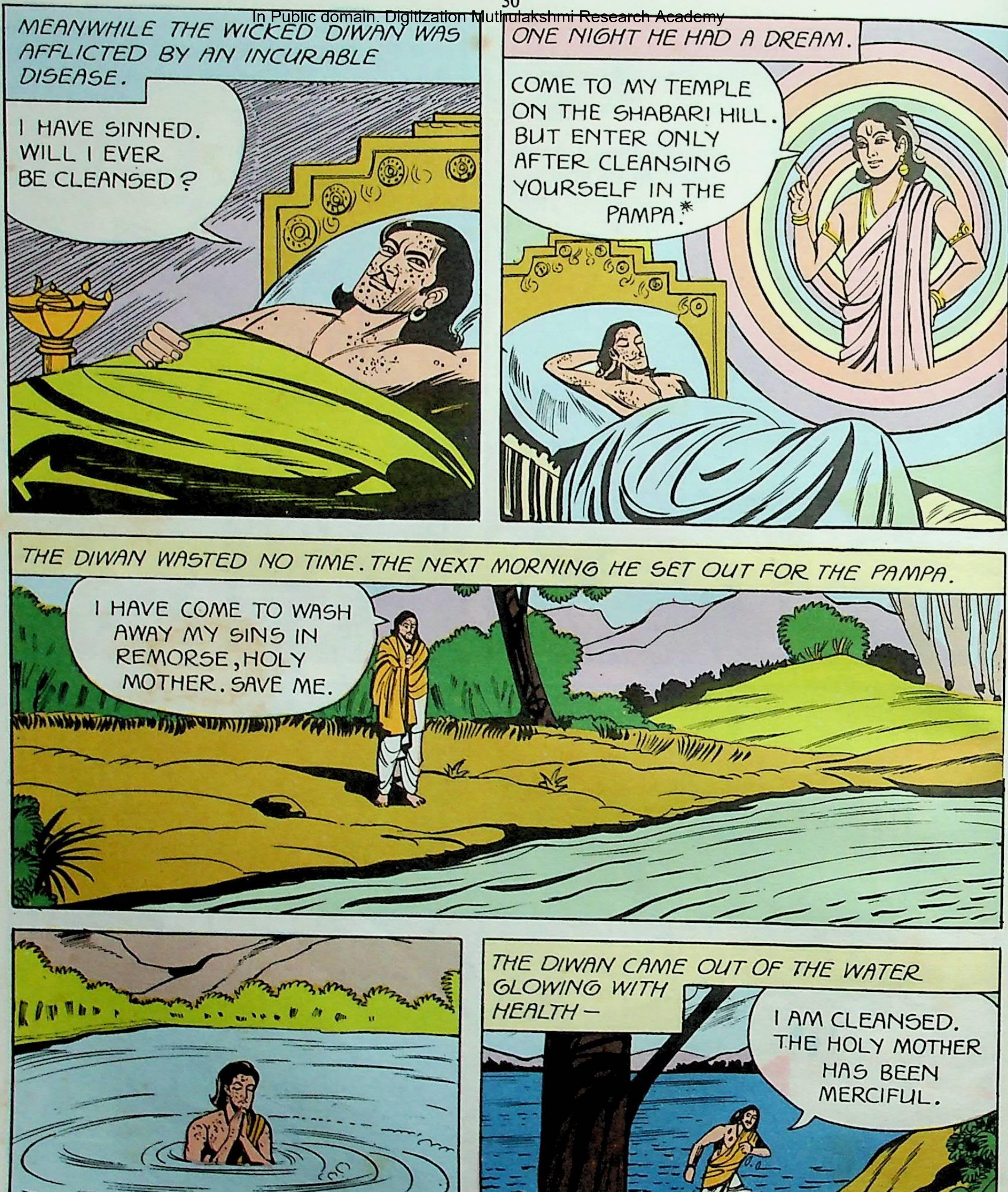

...THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE WAS SOON COMPLETED.
THROUGH THE LORD'S GRACE IT HAS RISEN – NOBLE AND IMPOSING.
WILL I FIND A BEFITTING IDOL NOW?
LORD VISHNU DIVINED THE KING'S ANXIETY. HE SENT FOR PARASHURAMA.
GO DOWN TO EARTH AS A STONE-CARVER AND HELP RAJASHEKHARA INSTALL THE IDOL.


PARASHURAMA LEFT FOR RAJASHEKHARA'S PALACE IN THE GARB OF A SCULPTOR.

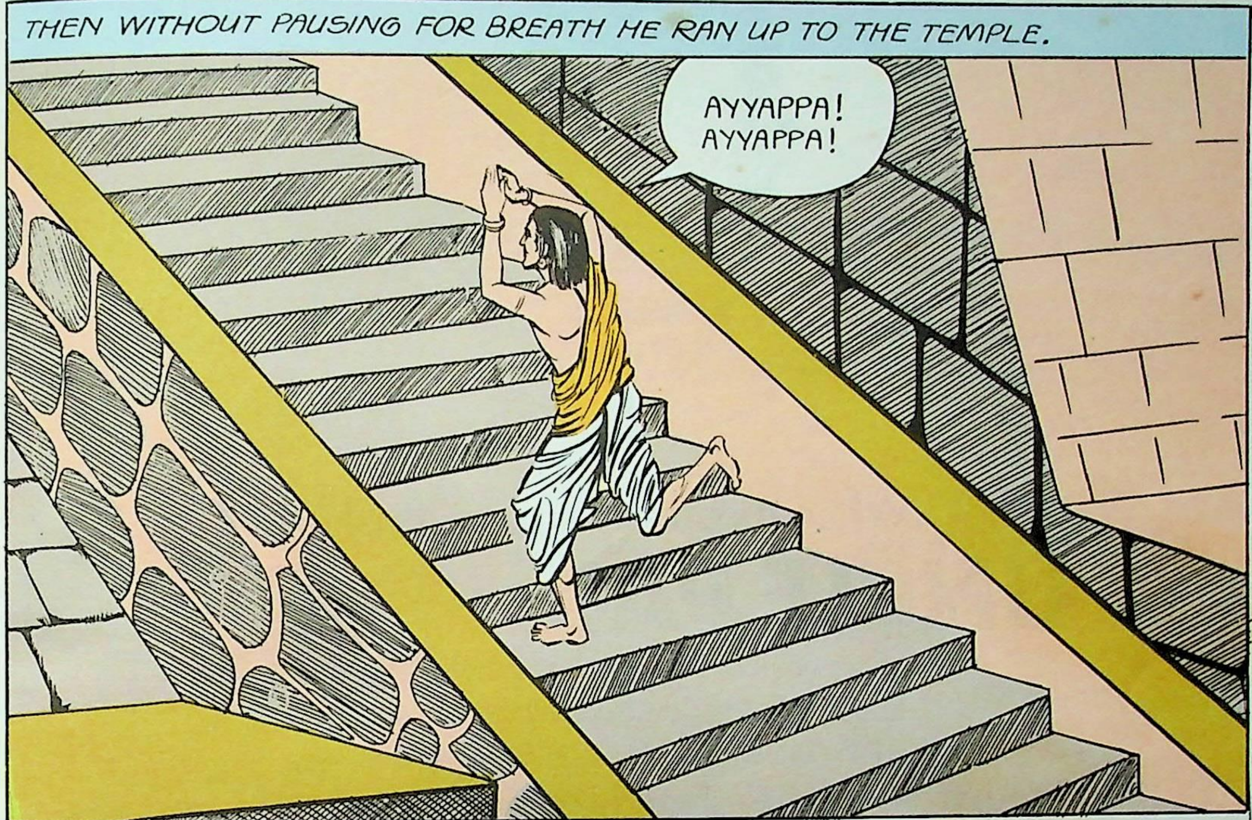

AT THE KING'S COURT—
I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR PROBLEM. I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.
SHOW ME YOUR WARES BEFORE YOU TAKE UP THE CHALLENGING TASK.

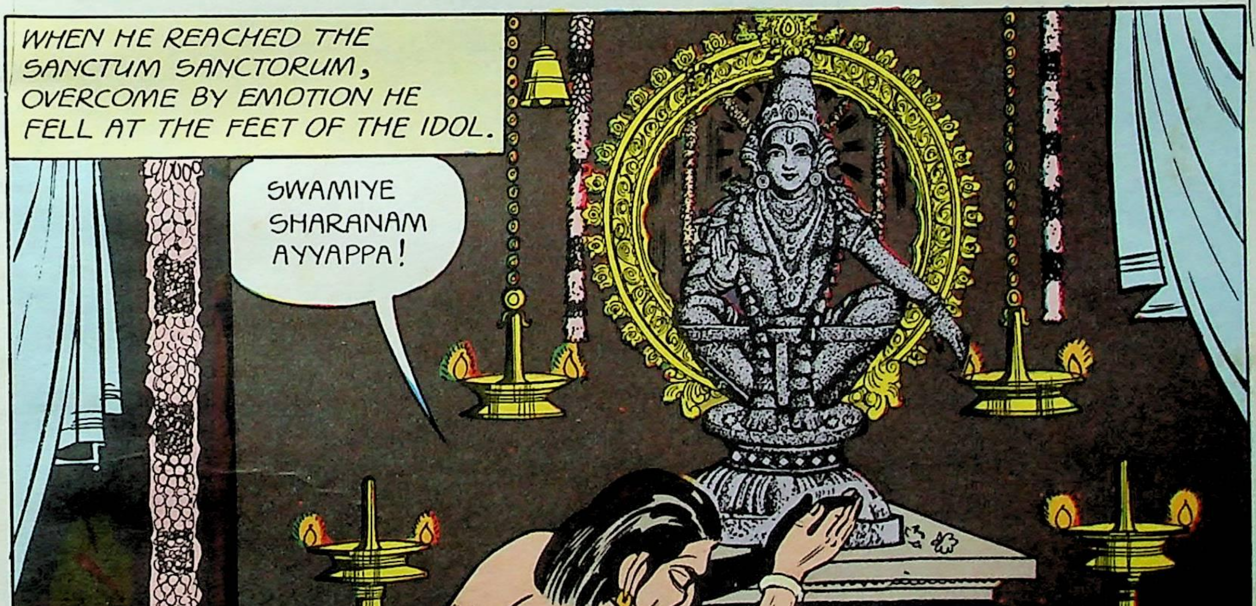

THEY ARE FLAWLESS, EACH ONE OF THEM.


YOU ARE NO ORDINARY SCULPTOR. TELL ME THE TRUTH. WHO ARE YOU?
I AM PARASHURAMA. I HAVE ALREADY FASHIONED THE IDOL.
PARASHURAMA ASSUMED HIS OWN FORM.
TODAY, THE DAY OF MAKARA SANKRANTI, IS AUSPICIOUS. I SHALL INSTALL THE IDOL STRAIGHTAWAY.
...AND THUS IT WAS THAT THE IMAGE OF AYYAPPA, AS MANIKANTHAN CAME TO BE POPULARLY KNOWN, WAS SANCTIFIED.


MEANWHILE THE WICKED DIWAN WAS AFFLICTED BY AN INCURABLE DISEASE.
I HAVE SINNED. WILL I EVER BE CLEANSED?
ONE NIGHT HE HAD A DREAM.
COME TO MY TEMPLE ON THE SHABARI HILL. BUT ENTER ONLY AFTER CLEANSING YOURSELF IN THE PAMPA.*
THE DIWAN WASTED NO TIME. THE NEXT MORNING HE SET OUT FOR THE PAMPA.
I HAVE COME TO WASH AWAY MY SINS IN REMORSE, HOLY MOTHER. SAVE ME.
THE DIWAN CAME OUT OF THE WATER GLOWING WITH HEALTH –
I AM CLEANSED. THE HOLY MOTHER HAS BEEN MERCIFUL.

* RIVER SAID TO BE ENLIVENED BY THE SPIRIT OF SHABARI, THE DEVOTEE OF LORD RAMA.


THEN WITHOUT PAUSING FOR BREATH HE RAN UP TO THE TEMPLE.
AYYAPPA! AYYAPPA!


WHEN HE REACHED THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM, OVERCOME BY EMOTION HE FELL AT THE FEET OF THE IDOL.
SWAMIYE SHARANAM AYYAPPA!
AND TO THIS DAY AS PILGRIMS MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE TEMPLE OF AYYAPPA, THEY CALL OUT 'SWAMIYE SHARANAM AYYAPPA.'

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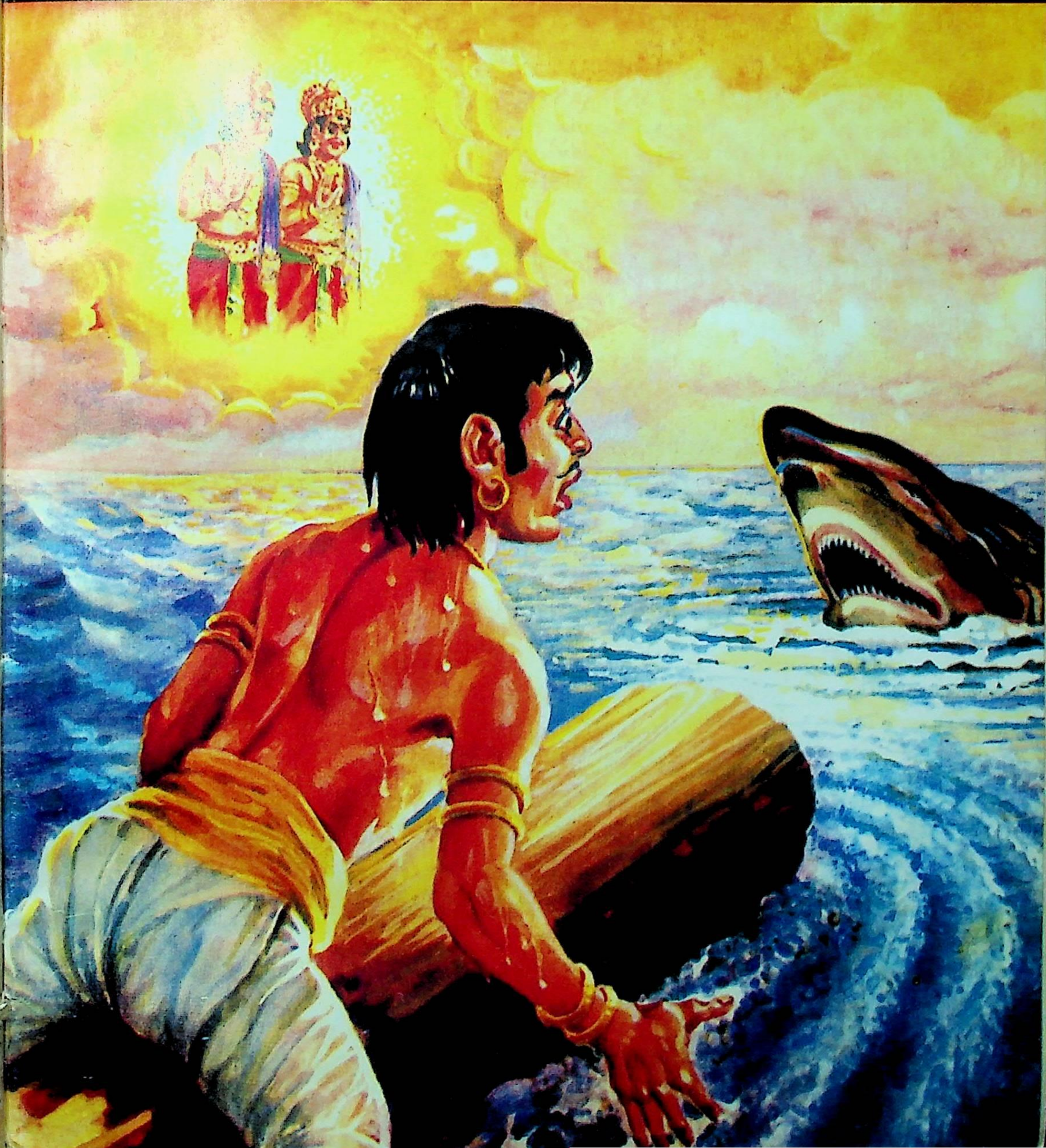

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

ASHWINI KUMARS

Bhujyu, the prince of Tugra, was shipwrecked and afloat in a treacherous sea. Sage Atri and his sons were doomed to certain death in a deep pit. Both were staunch devotees of the Ashwins, twin deities next in importance only to Indra, Agni and Soma. They appealed to them for help and were not disappointed. The two stories in this Amar Chitra Katha are developed solely from the Vedas.

Script
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Editor
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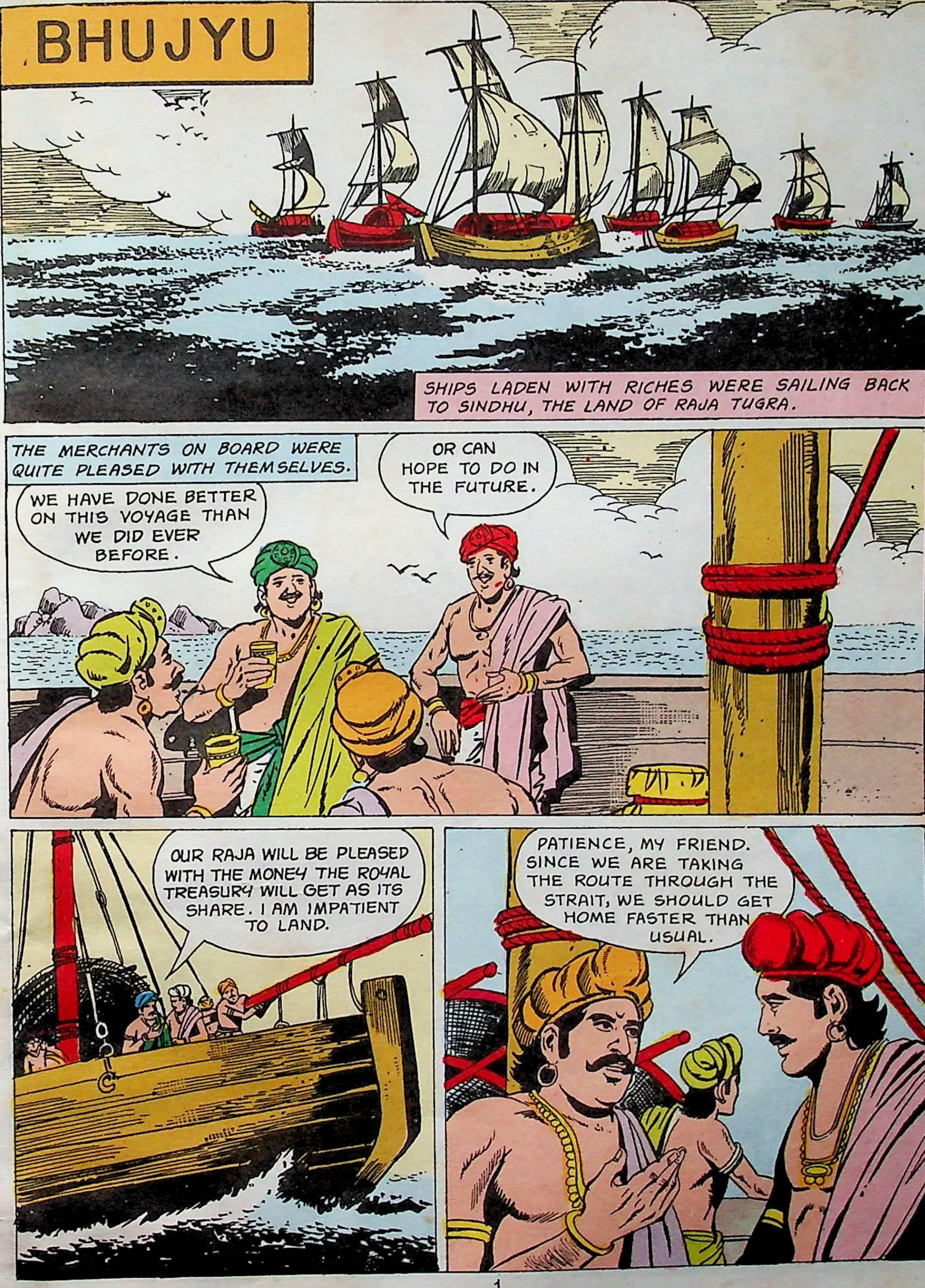
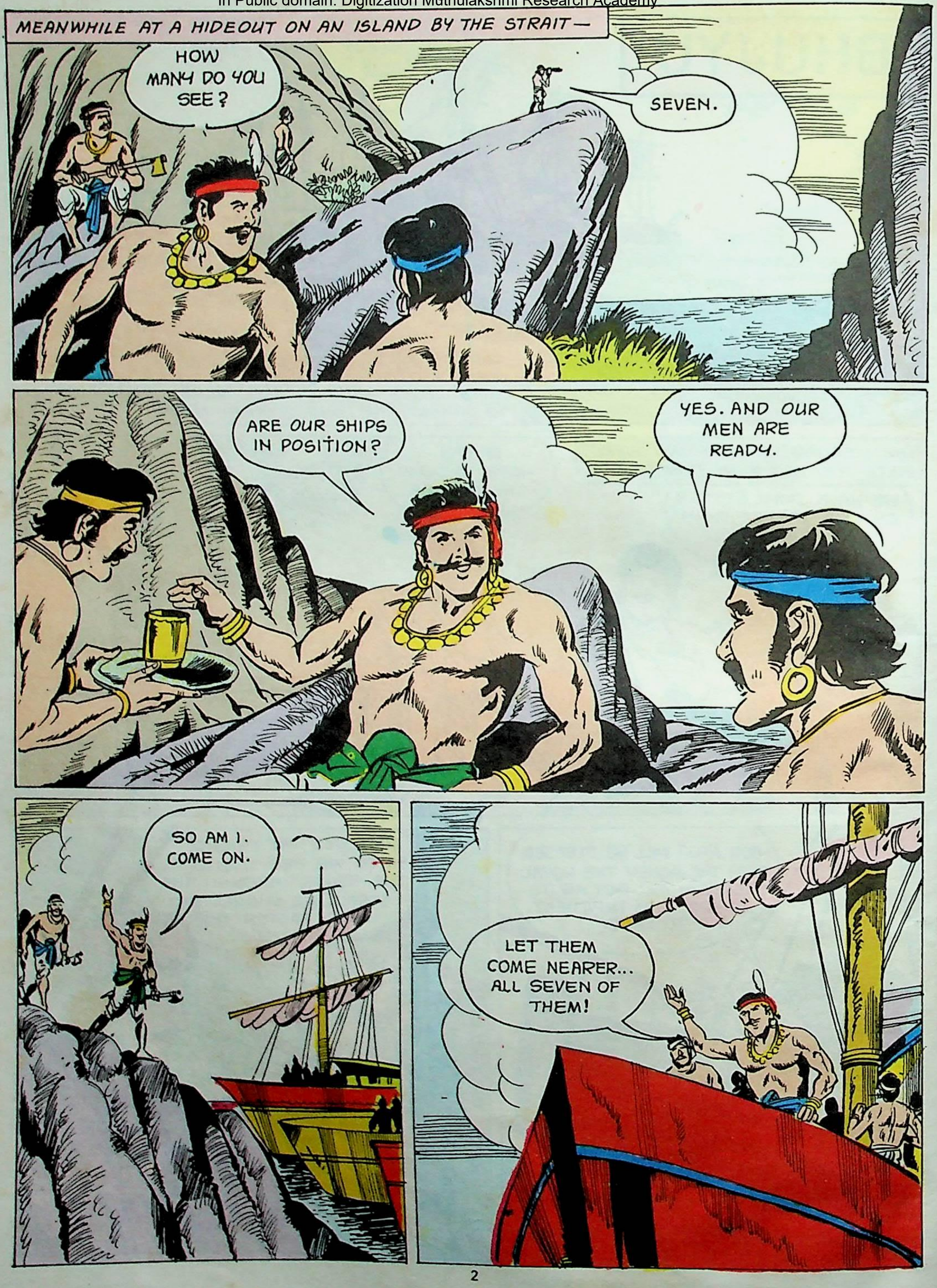
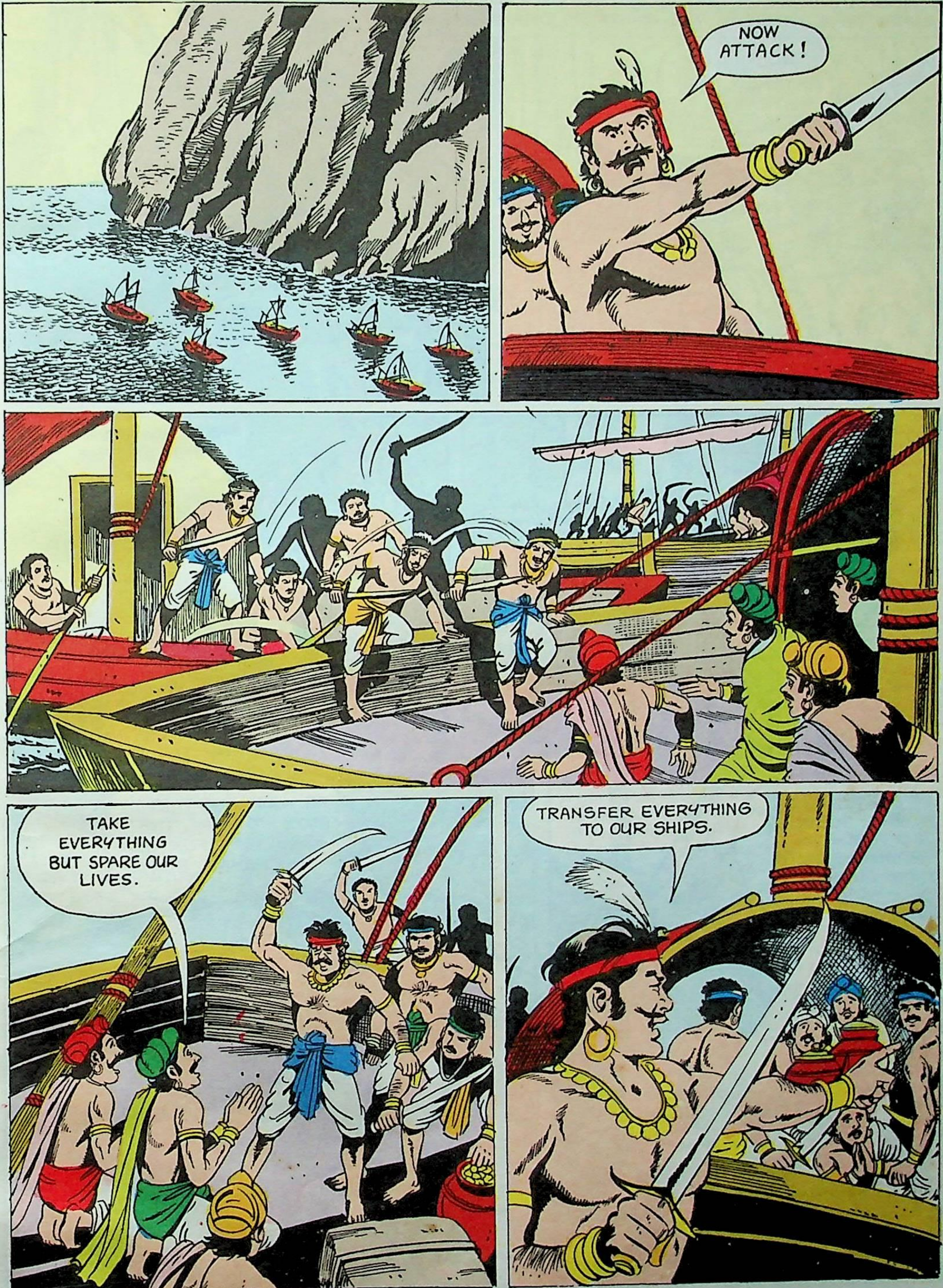
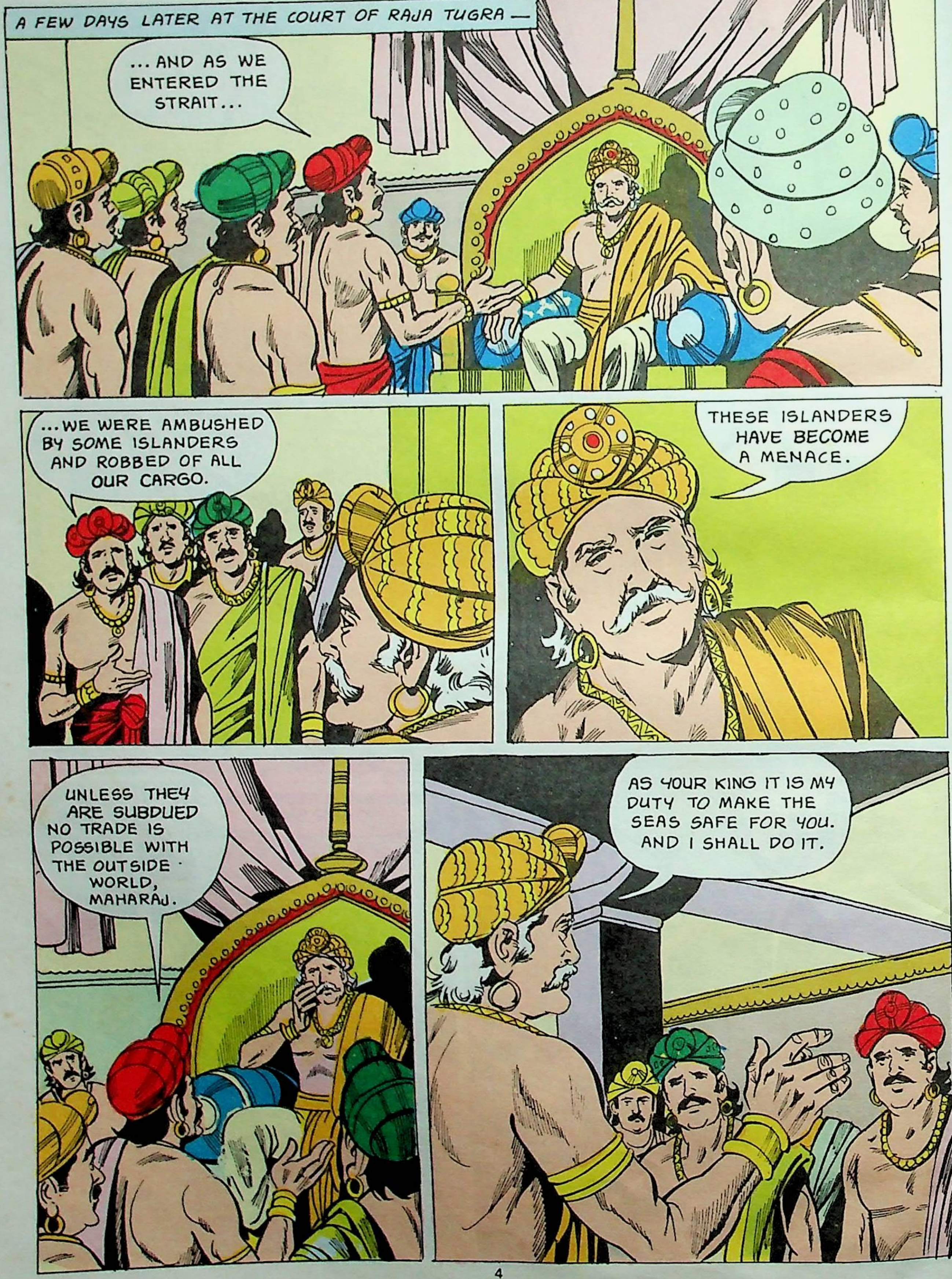
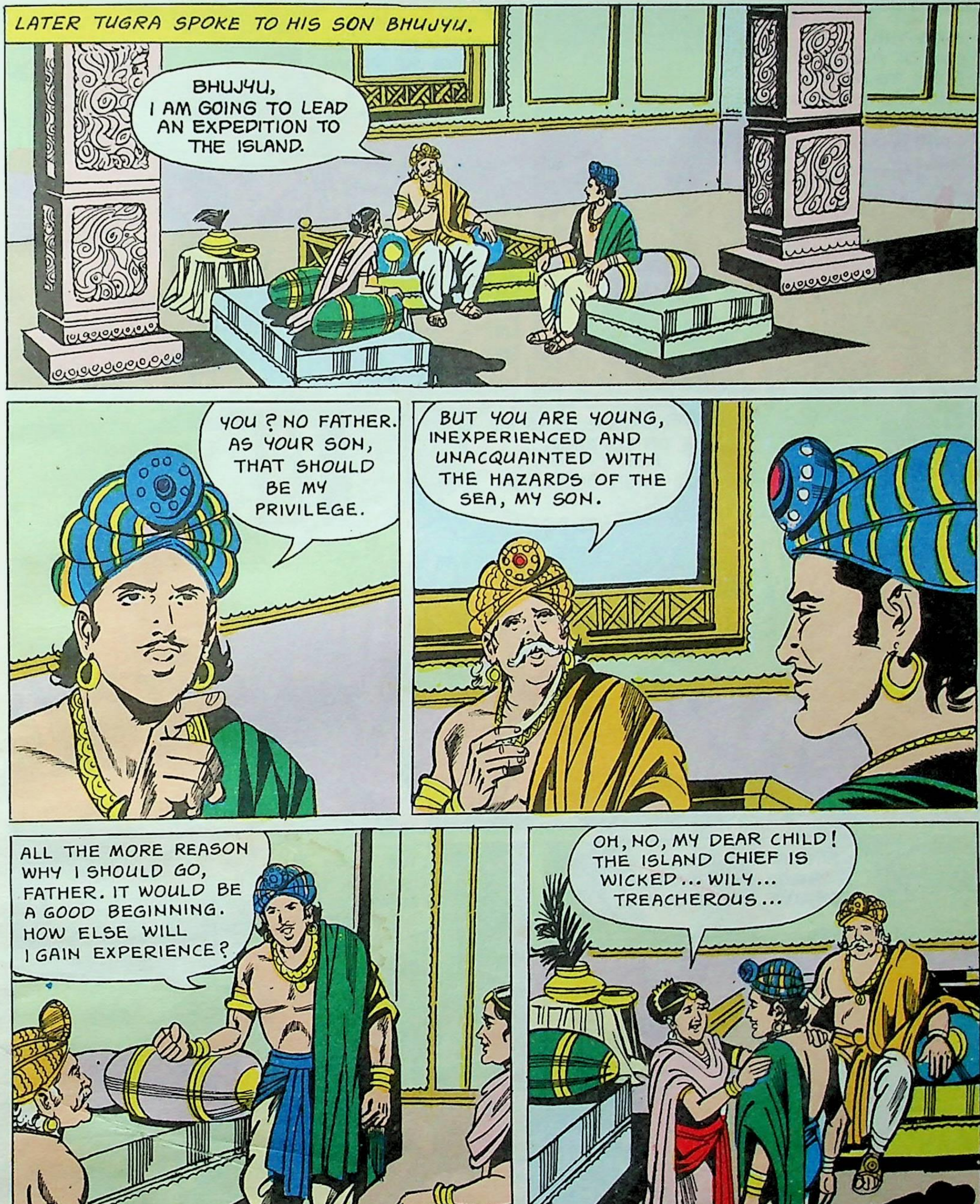
BHUJYU

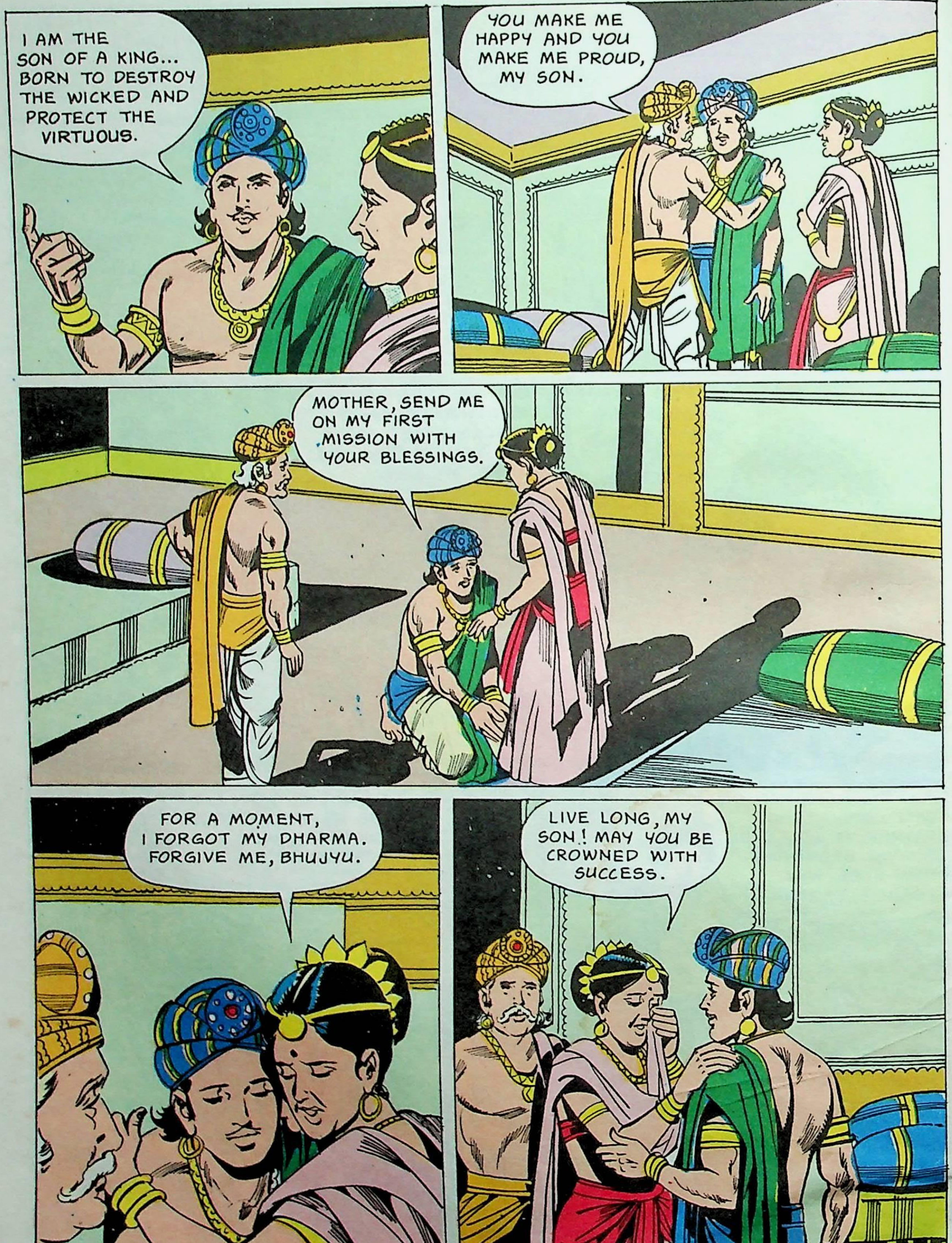

SHIPS LADEN WITH RICHES WERE SAILING BACK TO SINDHU, THE LAND OF RAJA TUGRA.
THE MERCHANTS ON BOARD WERE QUITE PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES.
WE HAVE DONE BETTER ON THIS VOYAGE THAN WE DID EVER BEFORE.
OR CAN HOPE TO DO IN THE FUTURE.
OUR RAJA WILL BE PLEASED WITH THE MONEY THE ROYAL TREASURY WILL GET AS ITS SHARE. I AM IMPATIENT TO LAND.
PATIENCE, MY FRIEND. SINCE WE ARE TAKING THE ROUTE THROUGH THE STRAIT, WE SHOULD GET HOME FASTER THAN USUAL.

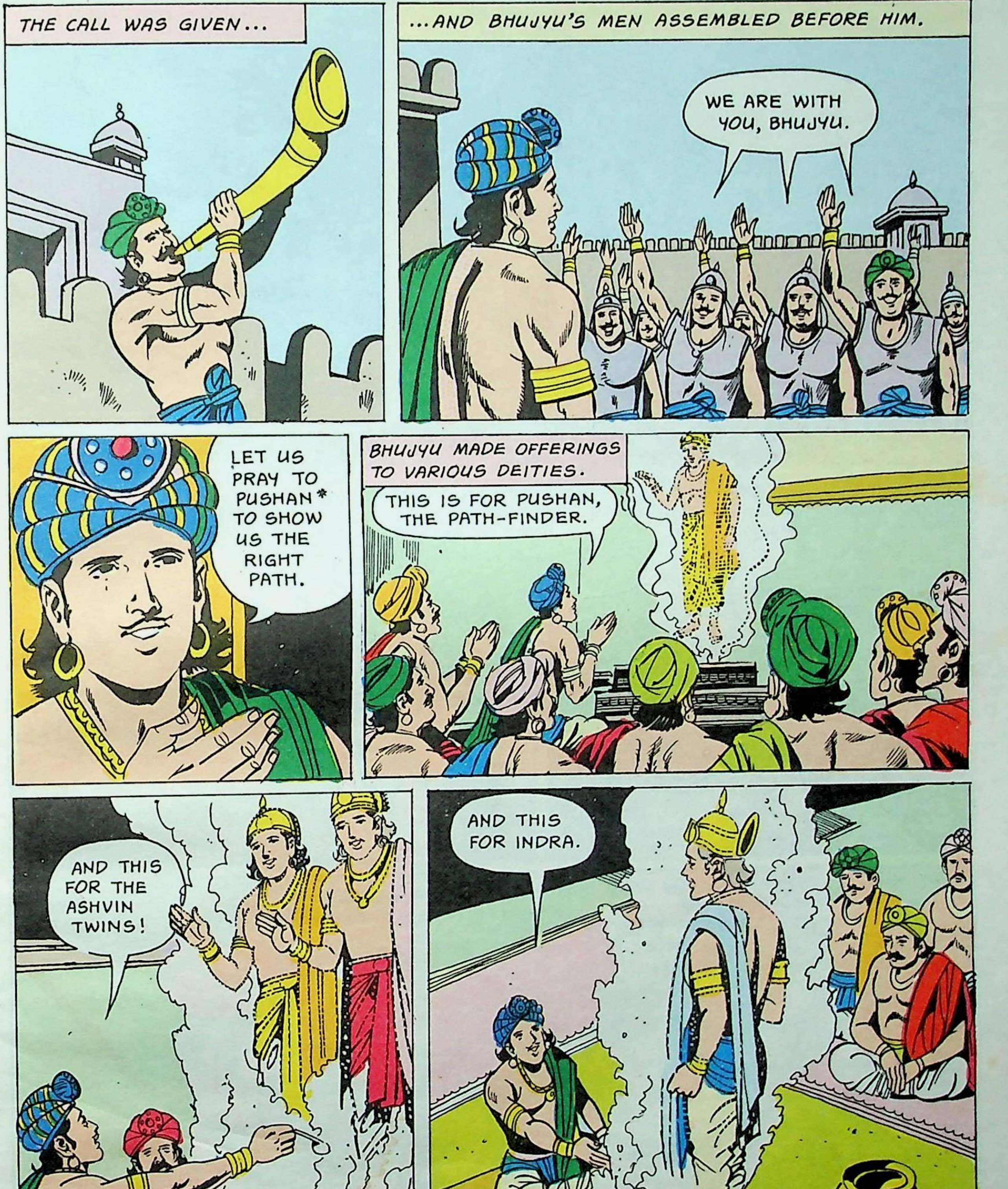

MEANWHILE AT A HIDEOUT ON AN ISLAND BY THE STRAIT—
HOW MANY DO YOU SEE?
SEVEN.
ARE OUR SHIPS IN POSITION?
YES. AND OUR MEN ARE READY.
SO AM I. COME ON.
LET THEM COME NEARER... ALL SEVEN OF THEM!


NOW ATTACK!
TAKE EVERYTHING BUT SPARE OUR LIVES.
TRANSFER EVERYTHING TO OUR SHIPS.


A FEW DAYS LATER AT THE COURT OF RAJA TUGRA —
... AND AS WE ENTERED THE STRAIT...
...WE WERE AMBUSHED BY SOME ISLANDERS AND ROBBED OF ALL OUR CARGO.
THESE ISLANDERS HAVE BECOME A MENACE.
UNLESS THEY ARE SUBDUED NO TRADE IS POSSIBLE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, MAHARAJ.
AS YOUR KING IT IS MY DUTY TO MAKE THE SEAS SAFE FOR YOU. AND I SHALL DO IT.

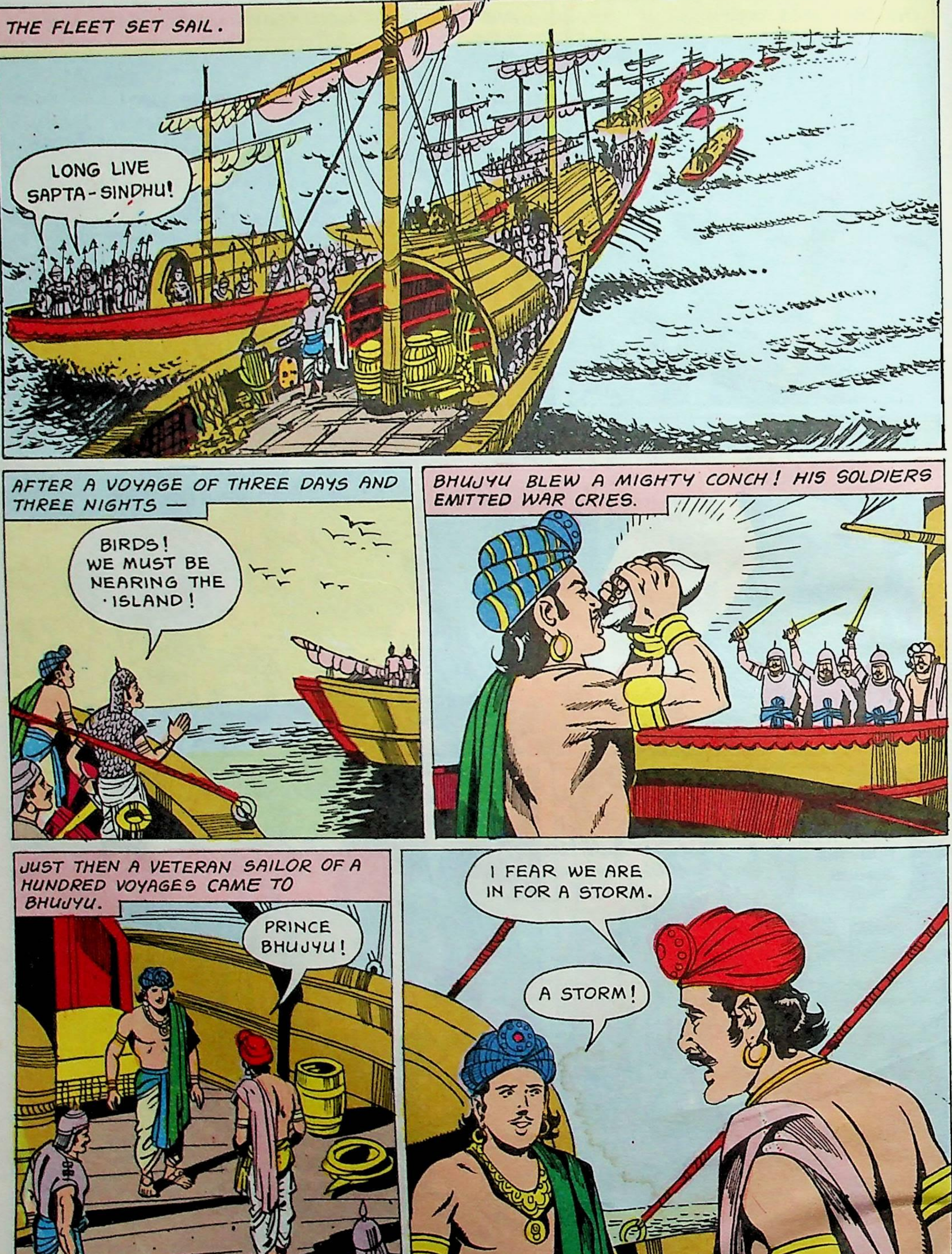

LATER TUGRA SPOKE TO HIS SON BHUJYU.
BHUJYU, I AM GOING TO LEAD AN EXPEDITION TO THE ISLAND.
YOU ? NO FATHER. AS YOUR SON, THAT SHOULD BE MY PRIVILEGE.
BUT YOU ARE YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED AND UNACQUAINTED WITH THE HAZARDS OF THE SEA, MY SON.
ALL THE MORE REASON WHY I SHOULD GO, FATHER. IT WOULD BE A GOOD BEGINNING. HOW ELSE WILL I GAIN EXPERIENCE?
OH, NO, MY DEAR CHILD! THE ISLAND CHIEF IS WICKED... WILY... TREACHEROUS...

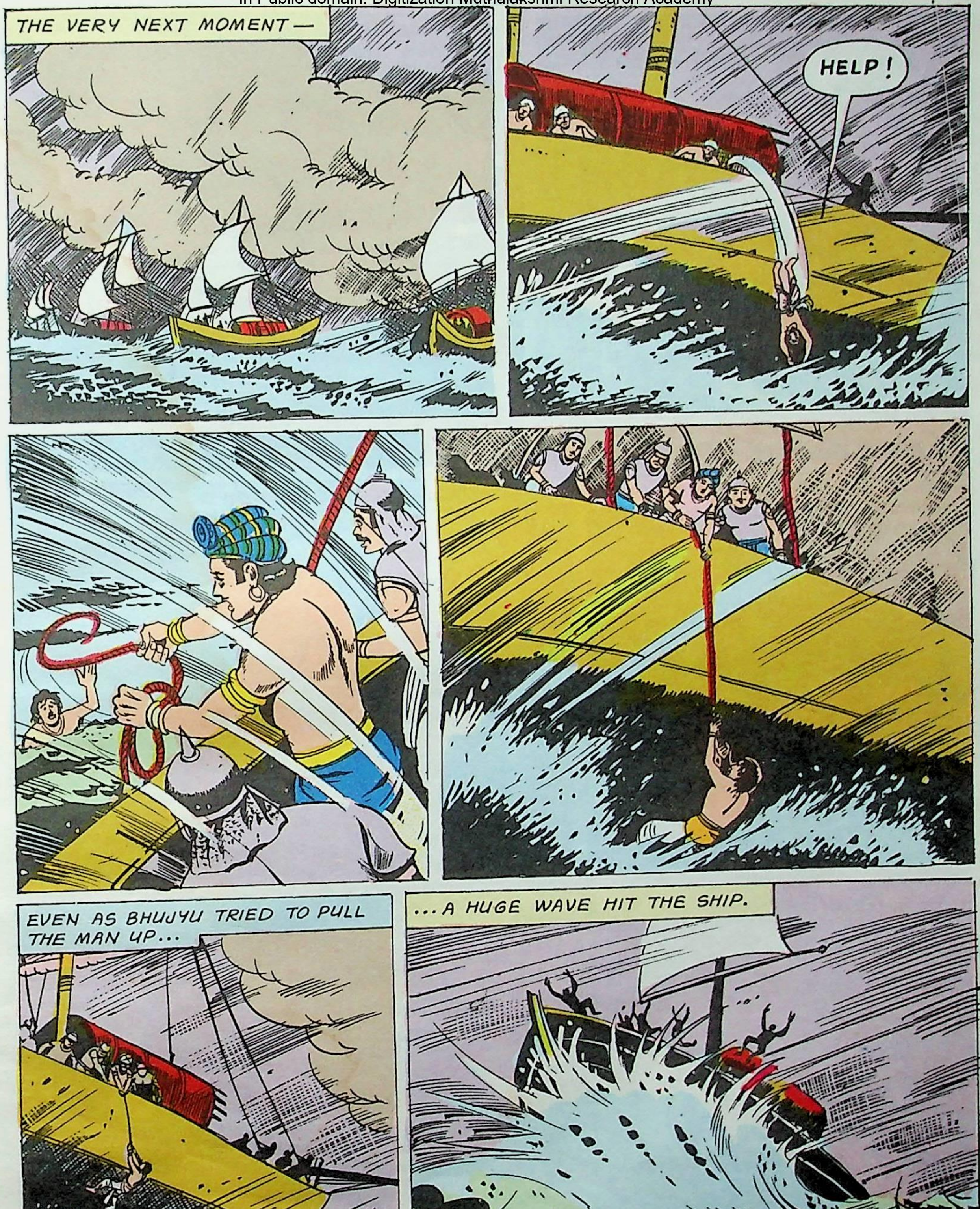

I AM THE SON OF A KING... BORN TO DESTROY THE WICKED AND PROTECT THE VIRTUOUS.
YOU MAKE ME HAPPY AND YOU MAKE ME PROUD, MY SON.
MOTHER, SEND ME ON MY FIRST MISSION WITH YOUR BLESSINGS.
FOR A MOMENT, I FORGOT MY DHARMA. FORGIVE ME, BHUJYU.
LIVE LONG, MY SON! MAY YOU BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

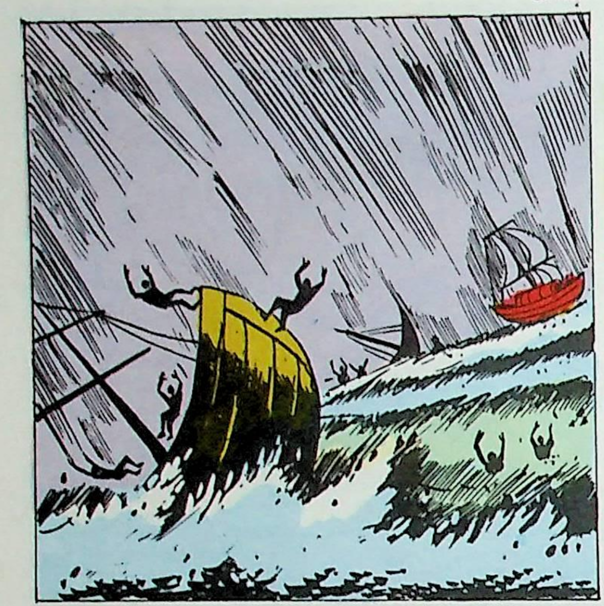

THE CALL WAS GIVEN...
...AND BHUJYU'S MEN ASSEMBLED BEFORE HIM.
WE ARE WITH YOU, BHUJYU.
LET US PRAY TO PUSHAN* TO SHOW US THE RIGHT PATH.
BHUJYU MADE OFFERINGS TO VARIOUS DEITIES.
THIS IS FOR PUSHAN, THE PATH-FINDER.
AND THIS FOR THE ASHVIN TWINS!
AND THIS FOR INDRA.

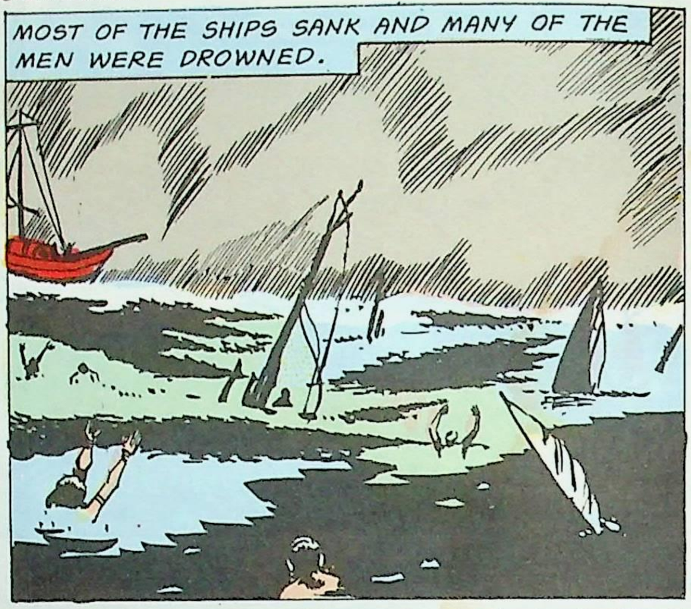
---

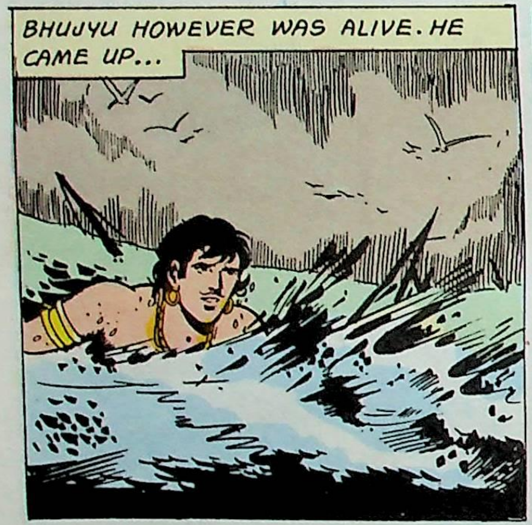
* SUN - GOD

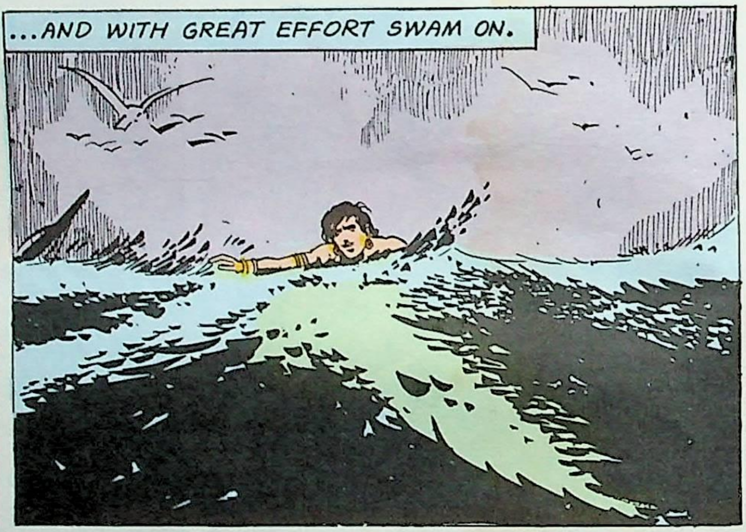

THE FLEET SET SAIL.
LONG LIVE SAPTA-SINDHU!
AFTER A VOYAGE OF THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS —
BIRDS! WE MUST BE NEARING THE ISLAND!
BHUJYU BLEW A MIGHTY CONCH! HIS SOLDIERS EMITTED WAR CRIES.
JUST THEN A VETERAN SAILOR OF A HUNDRED VOYAGES CAME TO BHUJYU.
PRINCE BHUJYU!
I FEAR WE ARE IN FOR A STORM.
A STORM!

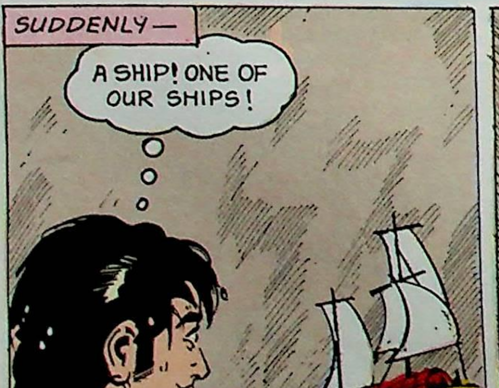

THE VERY NEXT MOMENT —
HELP!
EVEN AS BHUJYU TRIED TO PULL THE MAN UP...
... A HUGE WAVE HIT THE SHIP.

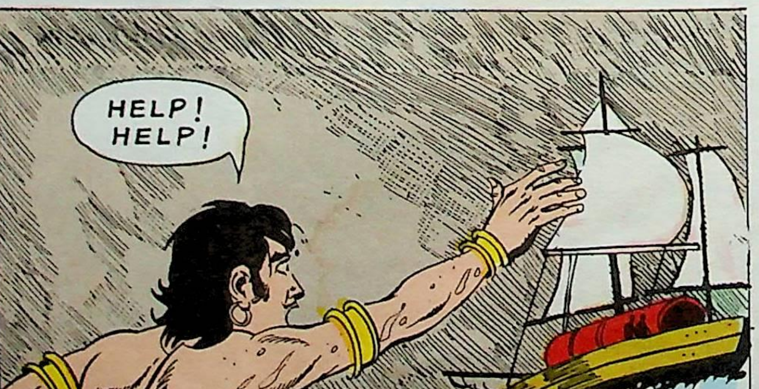



MOST OF THE SHIPS SANK AND MANY OF THE MEN WERE DROWNED.


BHUJYU HOWEVER WAS ALIVE. HE CAME UP...


...AND WITH GREAT EFFORT SWAM ON.


SUDDENLY—
A SHIP! ONE OF OUR SHIPS!


HELP! HELP!

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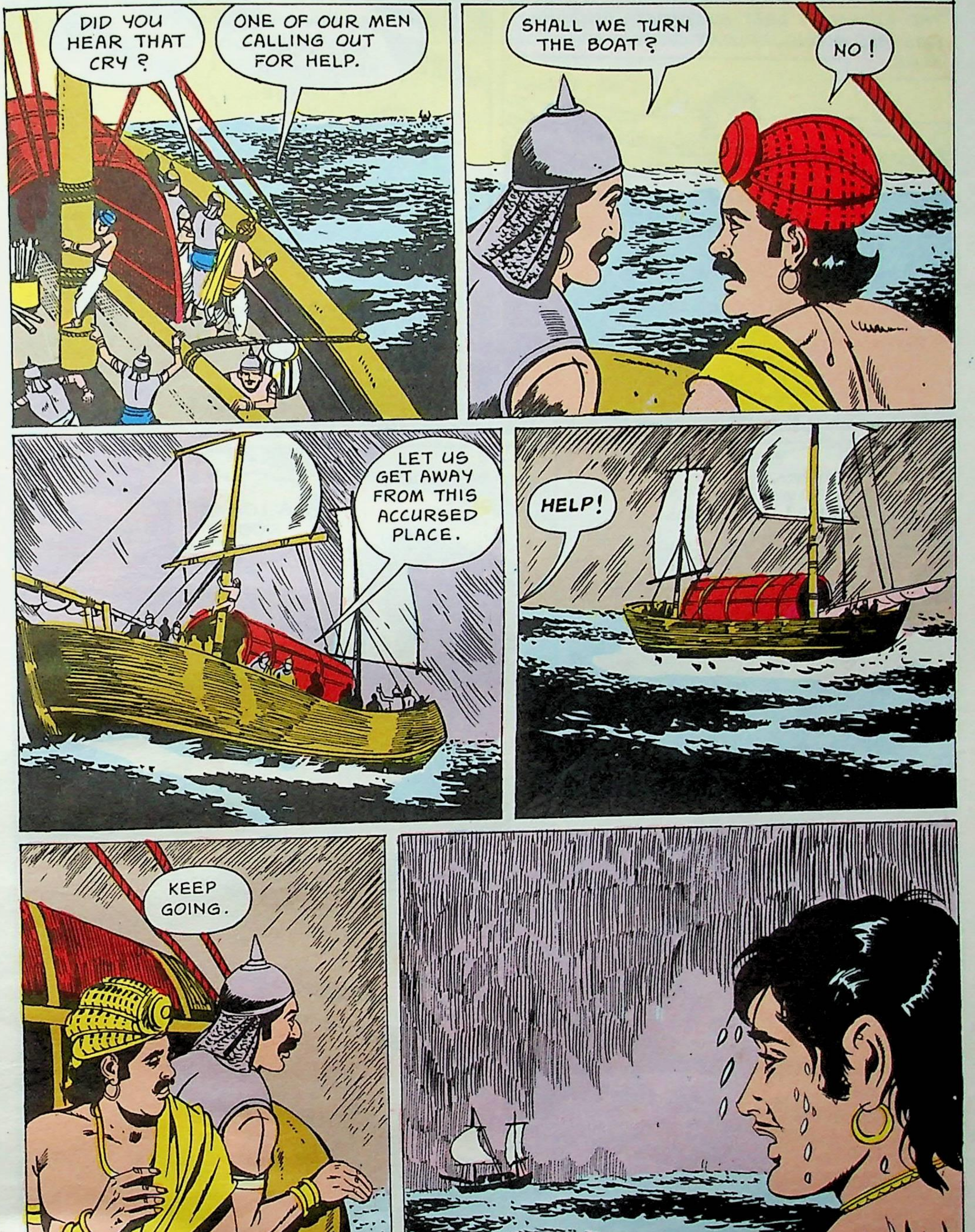
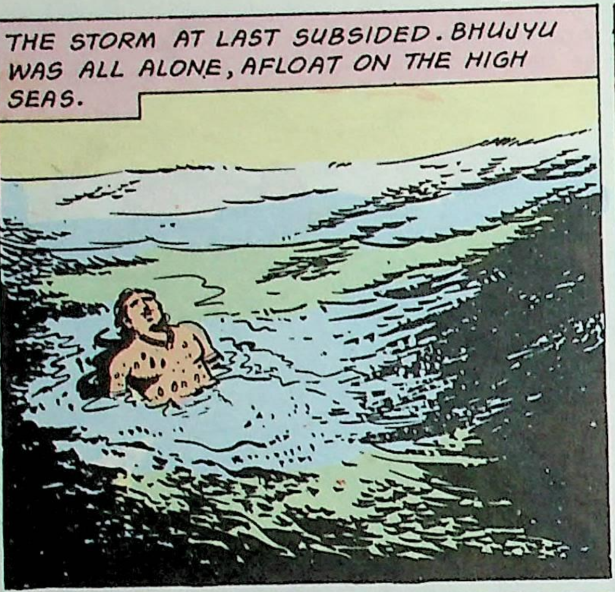
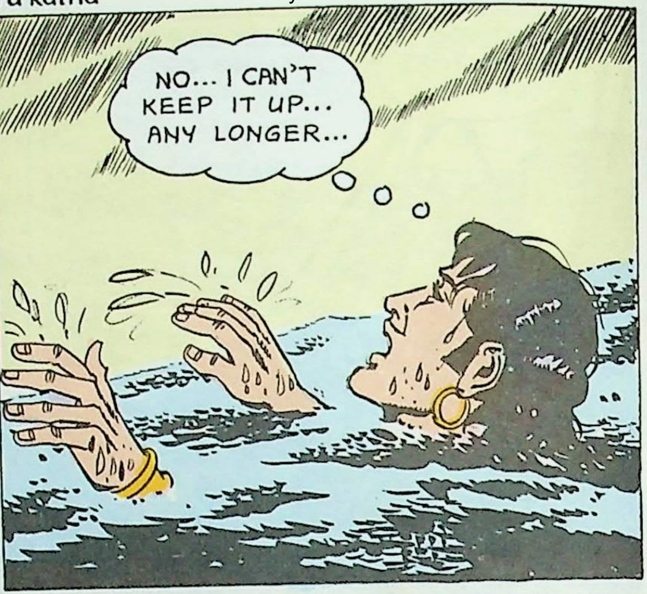
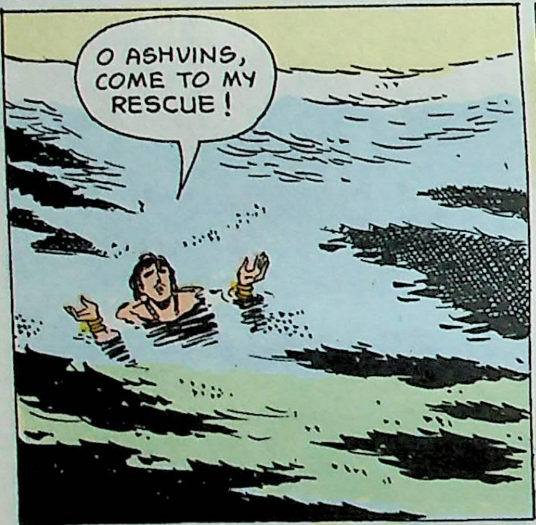
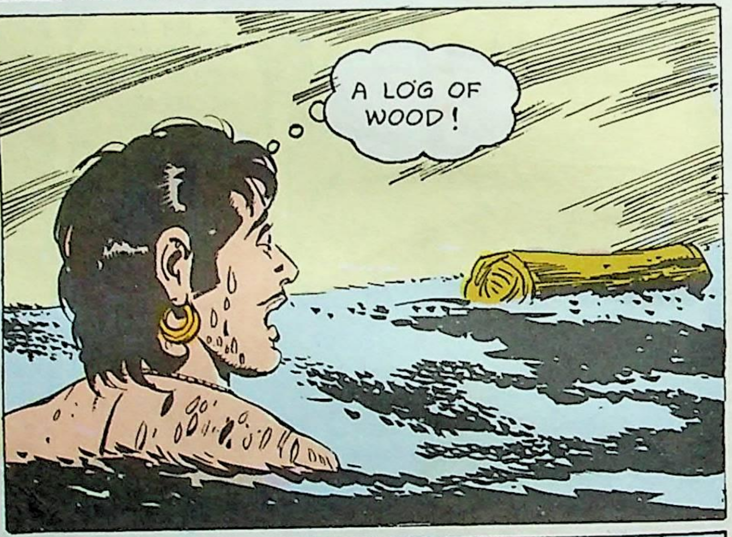
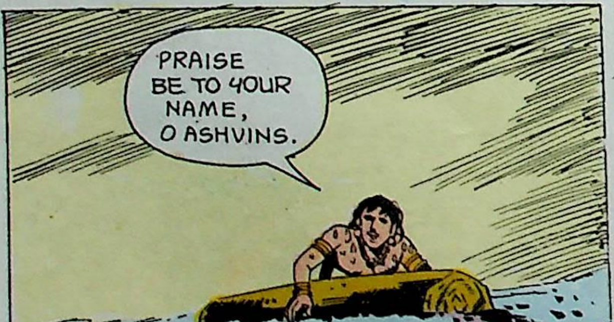

DID YOU HEAR THAT CRY ?
ONE OF OUR MEN CALLING OUT FOR HELP.
SHALL WE TURN THE BOAT ?
NO !
LET US GET AWAY FROM THIS ACCURSED PLACE.
HELP!
KEEP GOING.

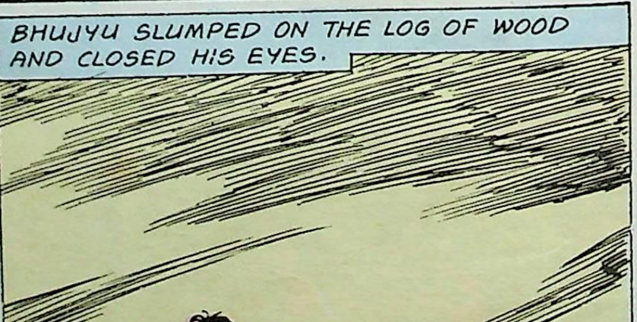

THE STORM AT LAST SUBSIDED. BHUJYU WAS ALL ALONE, AFLOAT ON THE HIGH SEAS.

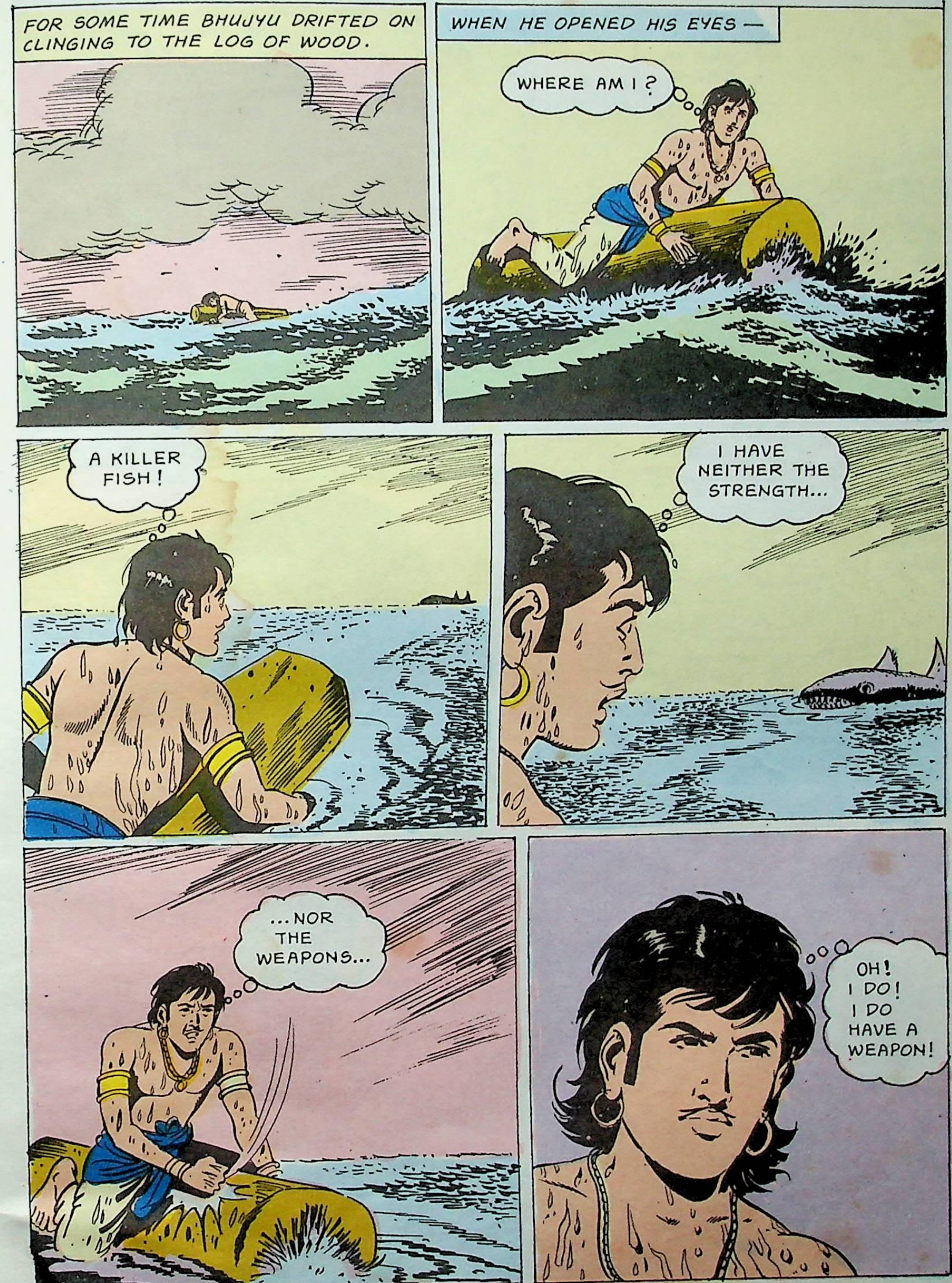

NO... I CAN'T KEEP IT UP... ANY LONGER...

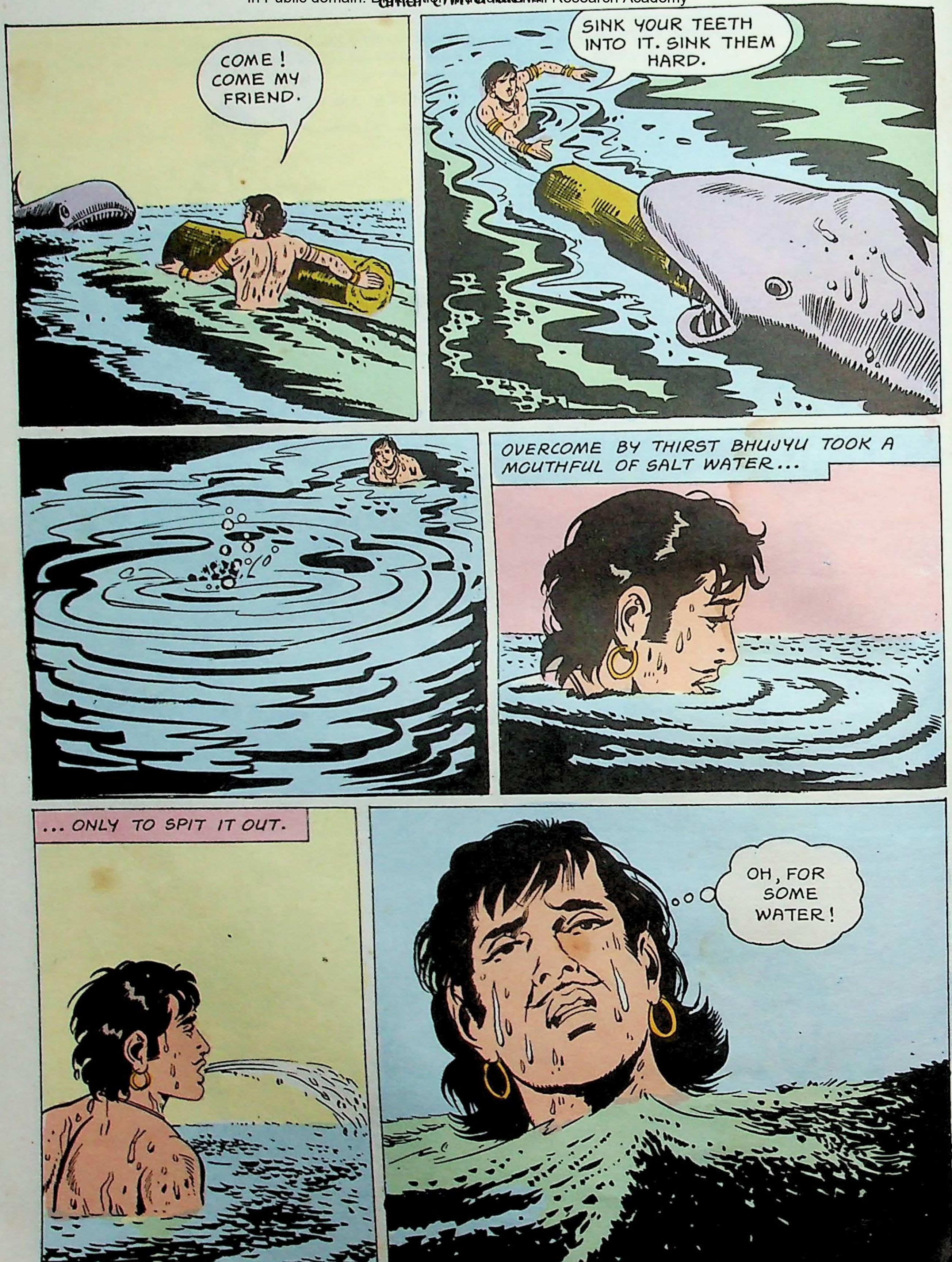

O ASHVINS, COME TO MY RESCUE!

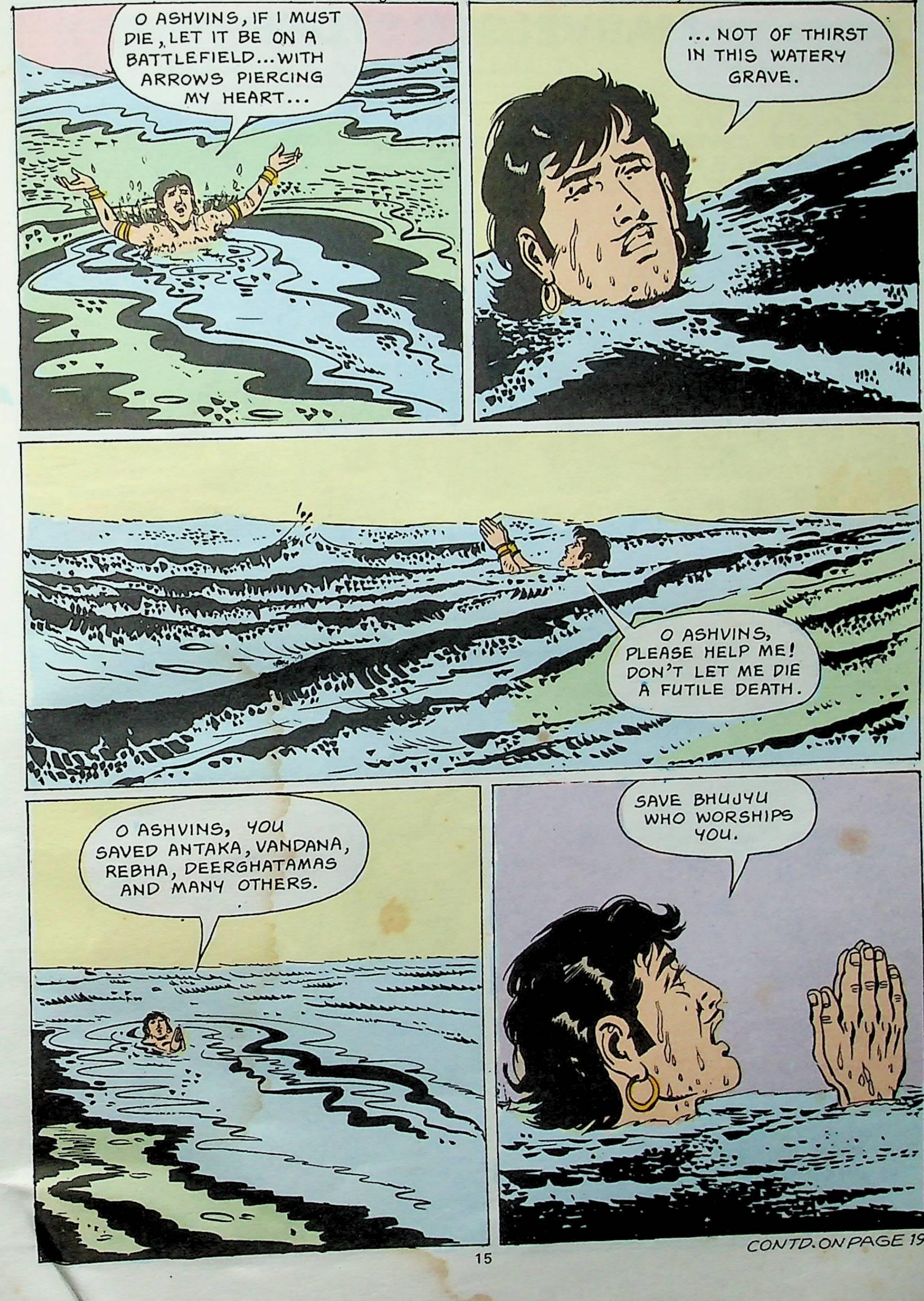

A LOG OF WOOD!


PRAISE BE TO YOUR NAME, O ASHVINS.


BHUJYU SLUMPED ON THE LOG OF WOOD AND CLOSED HIS EYES.


FOR SOME TIME BHUJYU DRIFTED ON CLINGING TO THE LOG OF WOOD.
WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES —
WHERE AM I?
A KILLER FISH!
I HAVE NEITHER THE STRENGTH...
...NOR THE WEAPONS...
OH! I DO! I DO HAVE A WEAPON!


COME! COME MY FRIEND.
SINK YOUR TEETH INTO IT. SINK THEM HARD.
OVERCOME BY THIRST BHUJYU TOOK A MOUTHFUL OF SALT WATER...
... ONLY TO SPIT IT OUT.
OH, FOR SOME WATER!


O ASHVINS, IF I MUST DIE, LET IT BE ON A BATTLEFIELD... WITH ARROWS PIERCING MY HEART...
... NOT OF THIRST IN THIS WATERY GRAVE.
O ASHVINS, PLEASE HELP ME! DON'T LET ME DIE A FUTILE DEATH.
O ASHVINS, YOU SAVED ANTAKA, VANDANA, REBHA, DEERGHATAMAS AND MANY OTHERS.
SAVE BHUJYU WHO WORSHIPS YOU.

CONTD. ON PAGE 19

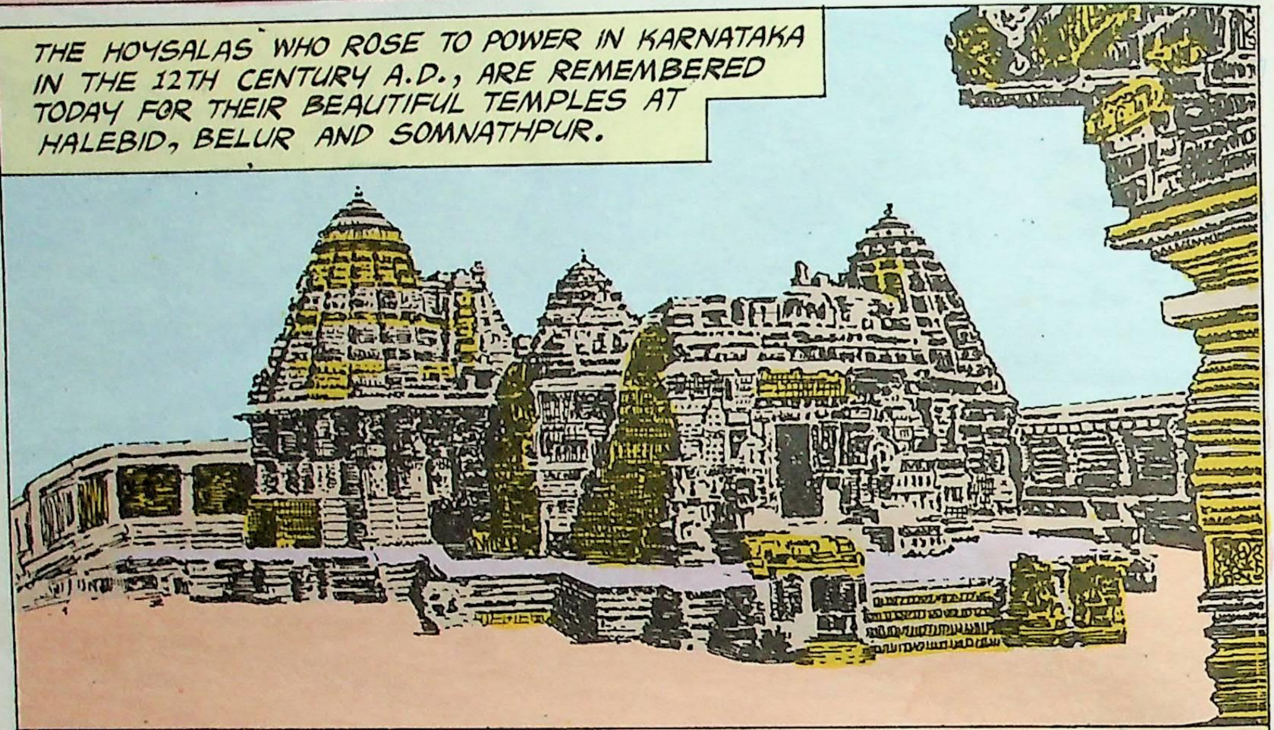
MARVELS IN STONE

(Halebid, Belur and Somnathpur)

Script : Swarn Khandpur

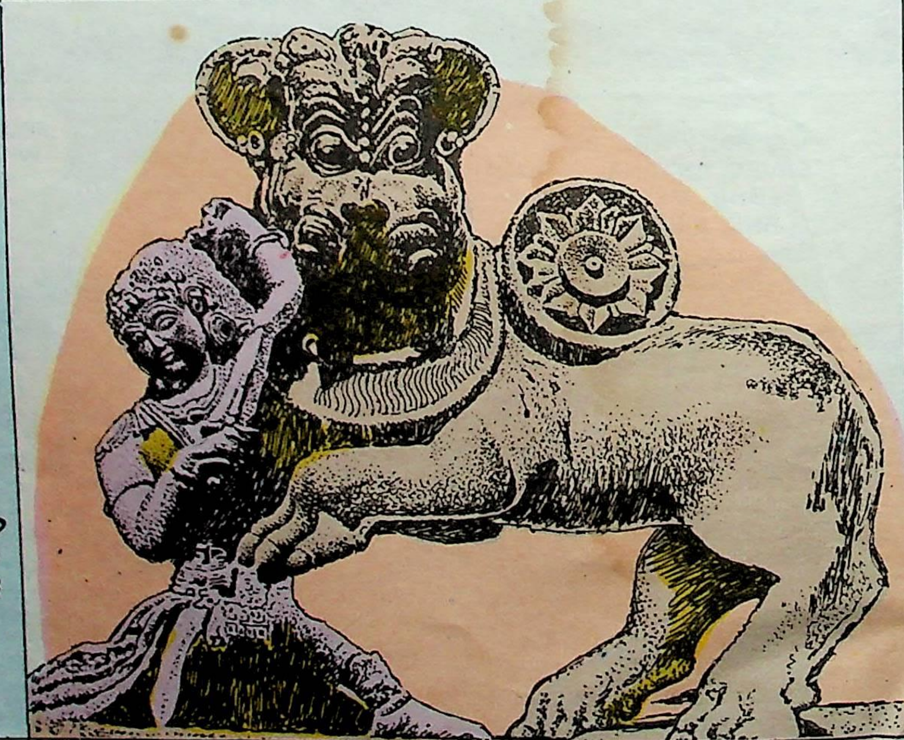
Illustrations : S. K. Parab

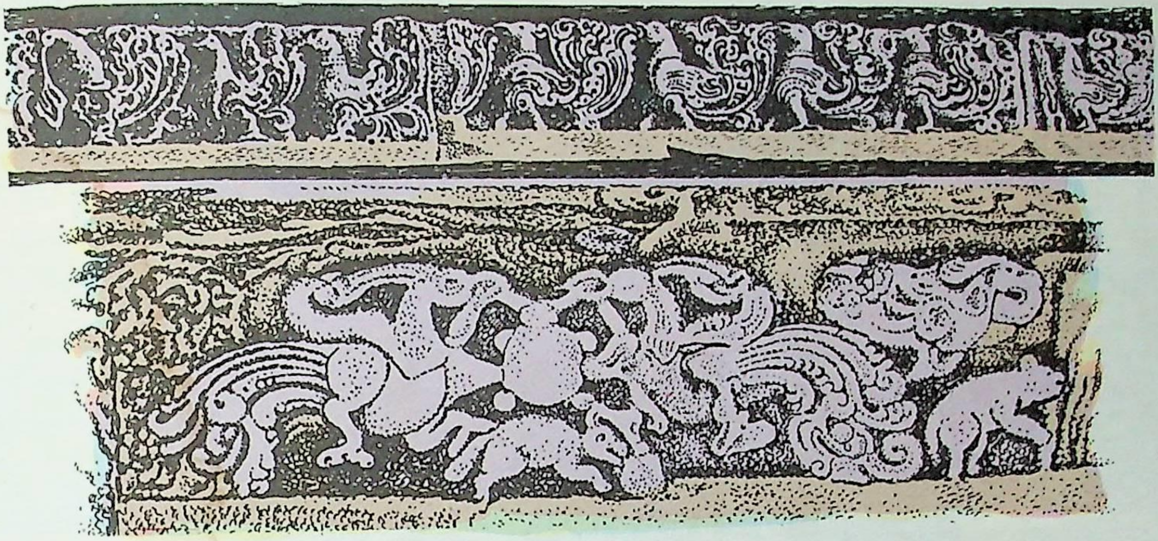
THE HOYSALAS WHO ROSE TO POWER IN KARNATAKA IN THE 12TH CENTURY A.D., ARE REMEMBERED TODAY FOR THEIR BEAUTIFUL TEMPLES AT HALEBID, BELUR AND SOMNATHPUR.



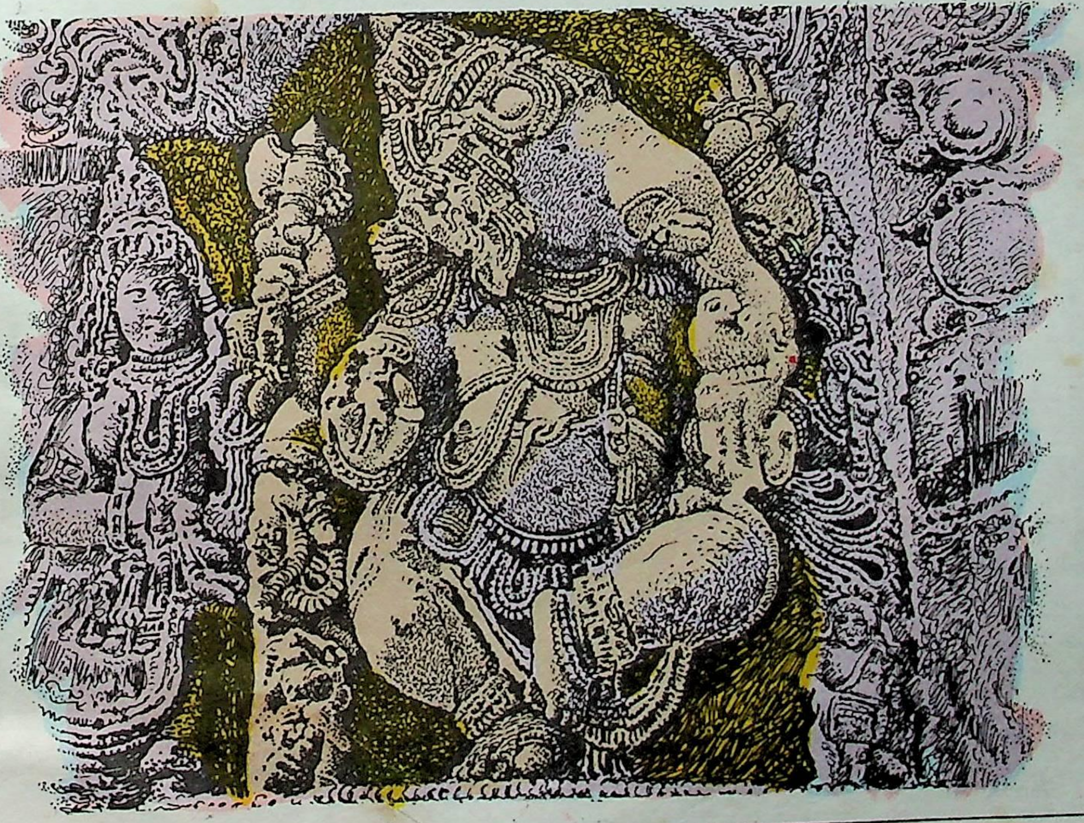
VERY DISTINCT IN STYLE, THESE TEMPLES ARE BUILT ON RAISED PLATFORMS AND DO NOT HAVE THE TALL GOPURAMS, SO TYPICAL OF SOUTH-INDIAN TEMPLES.

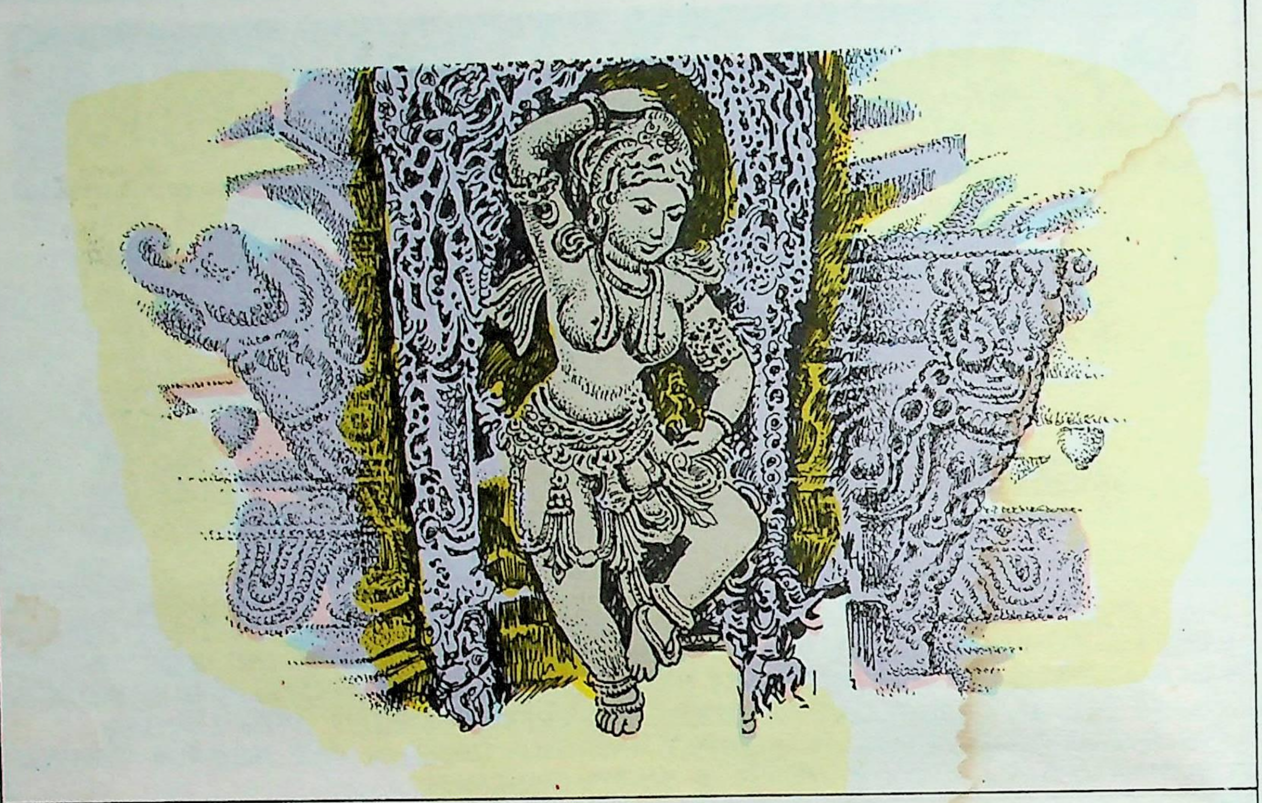
THE NAME "HOYSALA" HAS AN INTERESTING ORIGIN. 'HOY, SALA' (MEANING, STRIKE, SALA,) WERE THE WORDS SPOKEN TO SALA, A HUNTER, WHEN A HERMIT WAS THREATENED BY A TIGER. WHEN SALA KILLED THE TIGER, THE HERMIT BLESSED HIM WITH SOVEREIGNTY FOR SAVING HIS LIFE. SALA LATER FOUNDED A KINGDOM AND HIS HEROIC ACT BECAME THE EMBLEM OF THE DYNASTY.



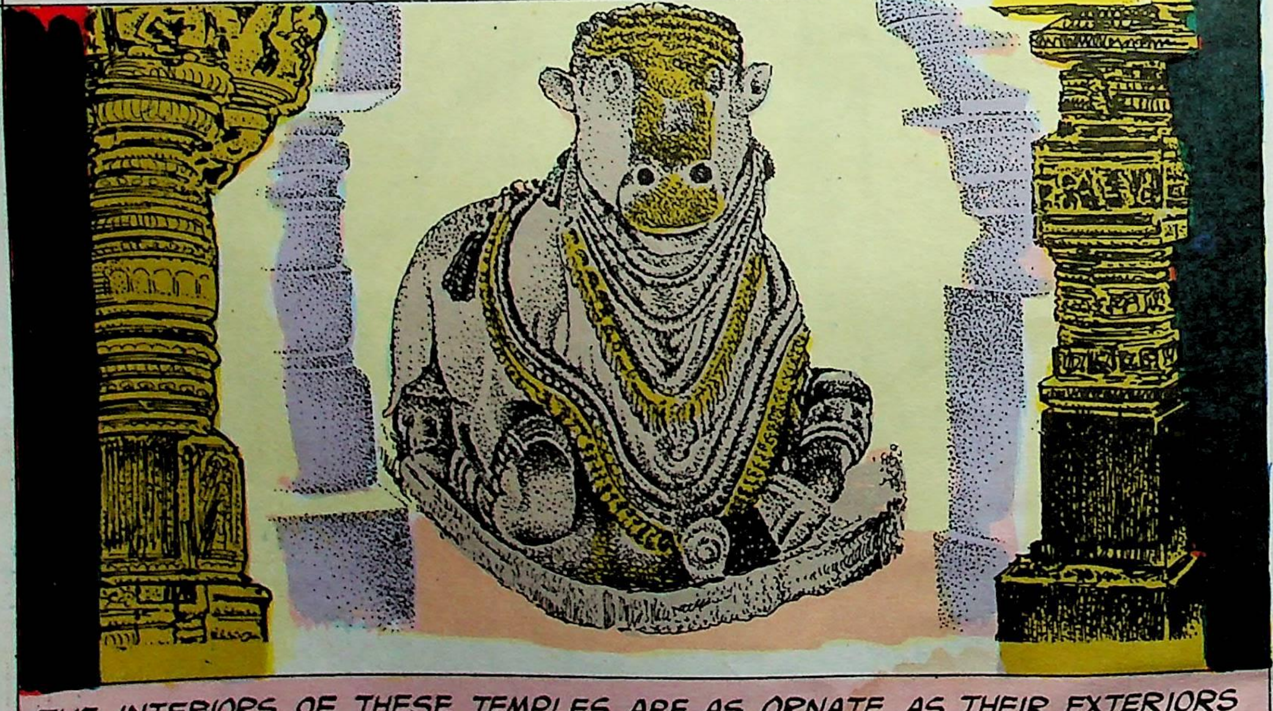


THE HOYSALA TEMPLES ARE HIGHLY DECORATIVE. THEY HAVE ELABORATE CARVED FRIEZES RUNNING ROUND THEIR WALLS. THE FRIEZE REPRODUCED HERE DEPICTS A SCENE FROM THE PANCHATANTRA STORY OF THE TURTLE WHO FELL OFF THE STICK. THESE HIGHLY CHISELLED FRIEZES ARE INTERSPERSED WITH LARGER FIGURES OF DANCERS, MUSICIANS AND HUNTERS. IN THE KESAVA TEMPLE (SOMNATHPUR) EVEN GANESHA IS SHOWN DANCING.





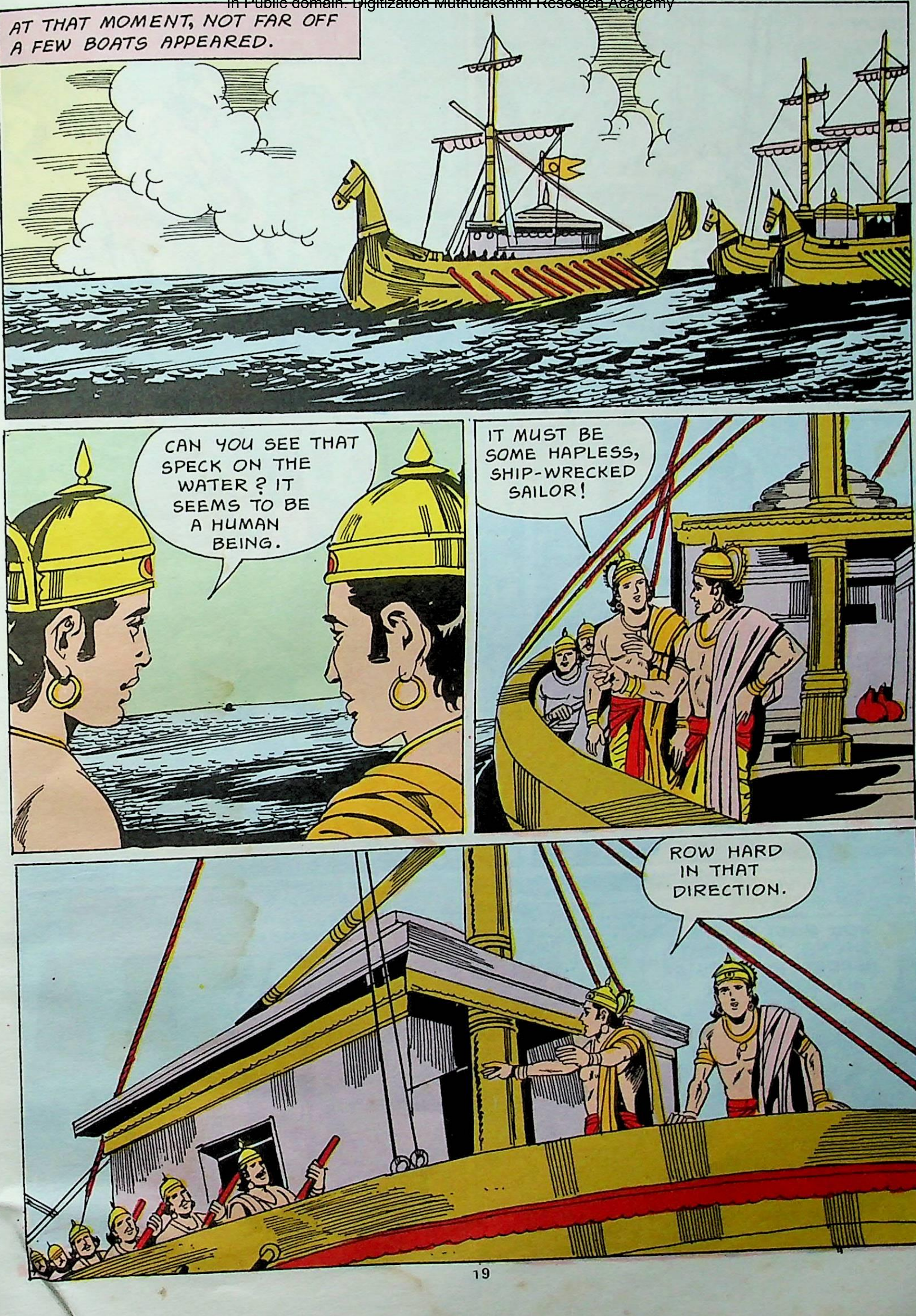
SUPPORTING THE EAVES OF THE TEMPLES ARE ORNATE FIGURES IN GRACEFUL POSES.

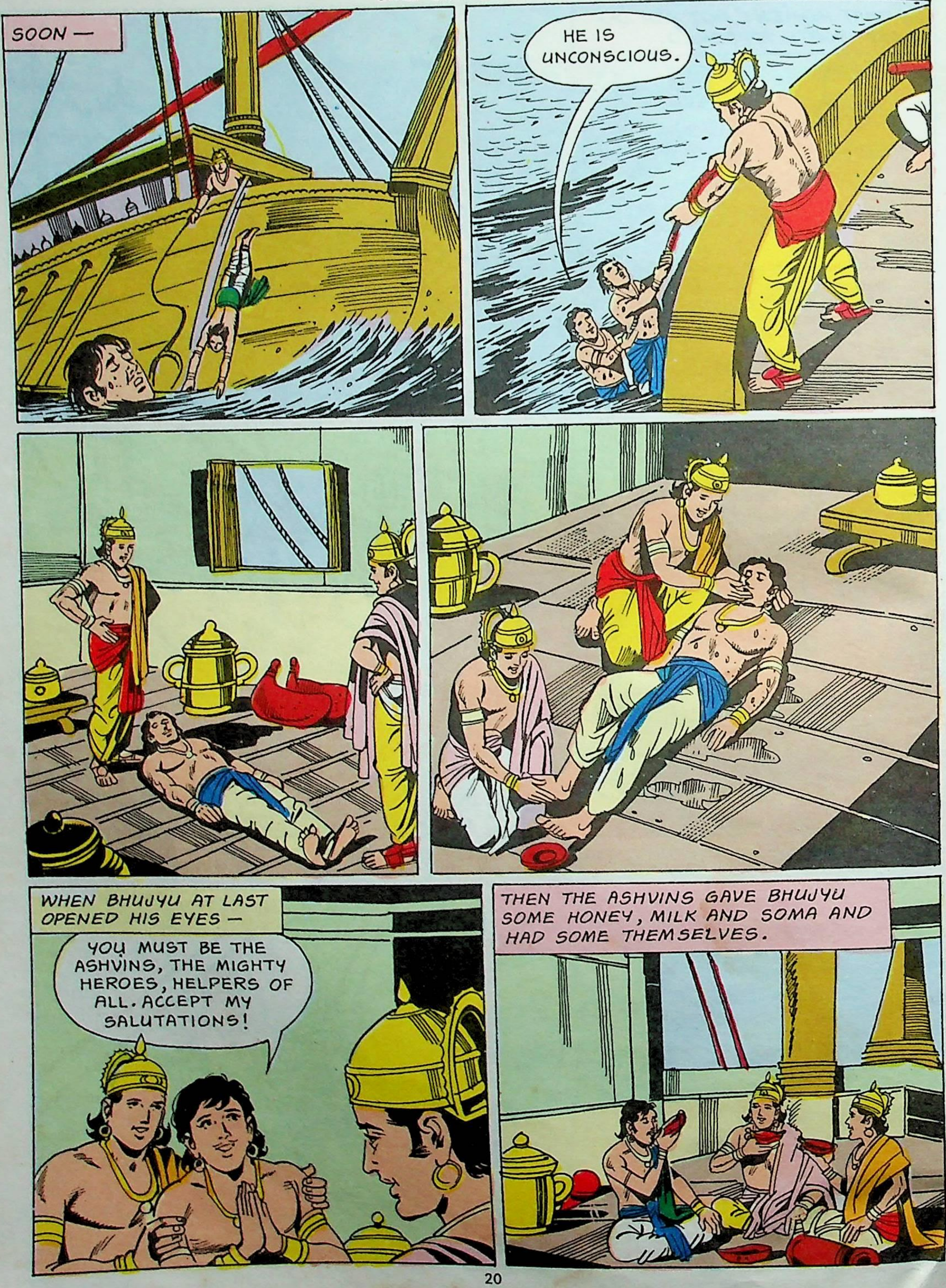


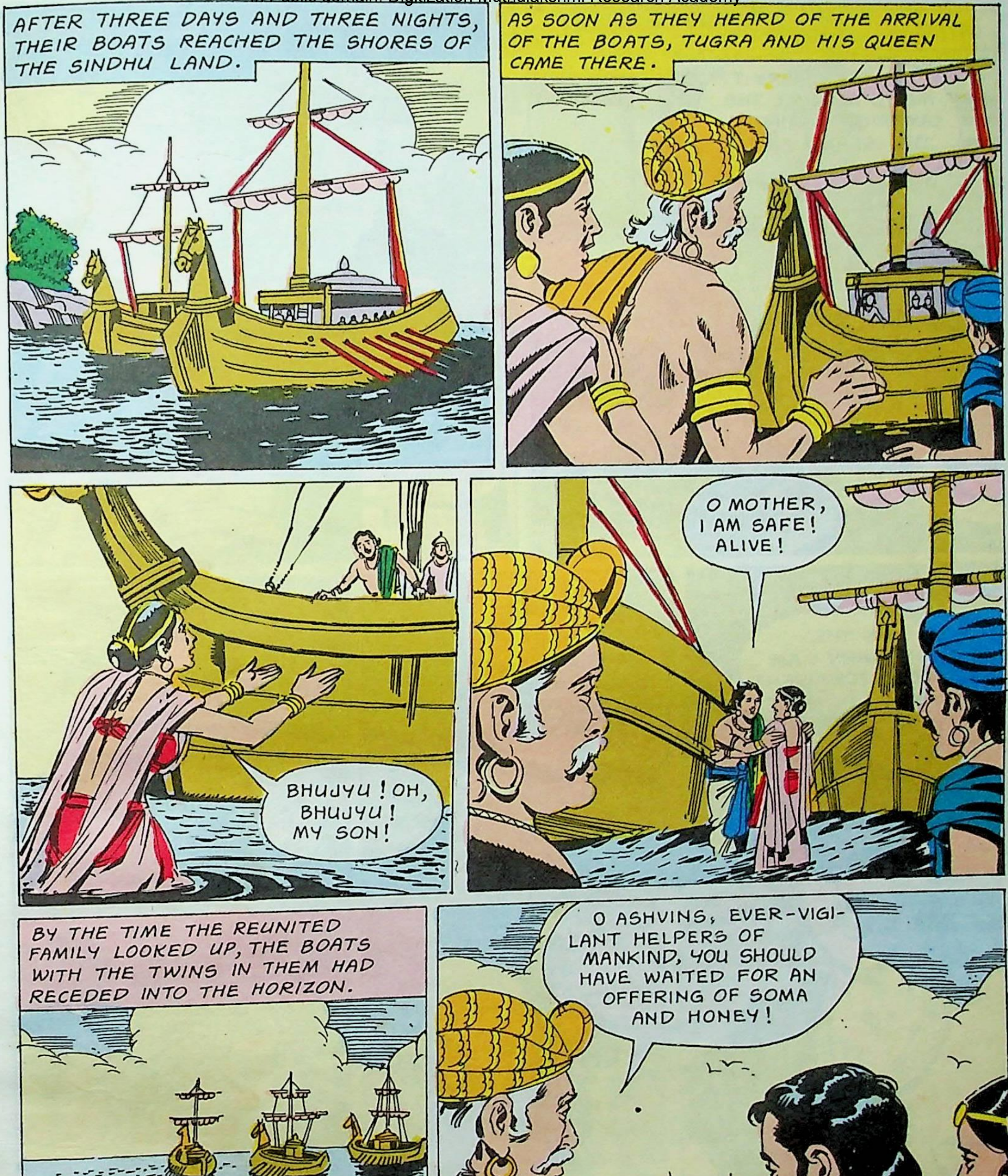
THE INTERIORS OF THESE TEMPLES ARE AS ORNATE AS THEIR EXTERIORS WITH FINELY CARVED PILLARS. AND THIS NANDI, VAHAN* OF SHIVA, SEEMS TO HAVE RECEIVED SPECIAL ATTENTION FROM THE SCULPTOR.

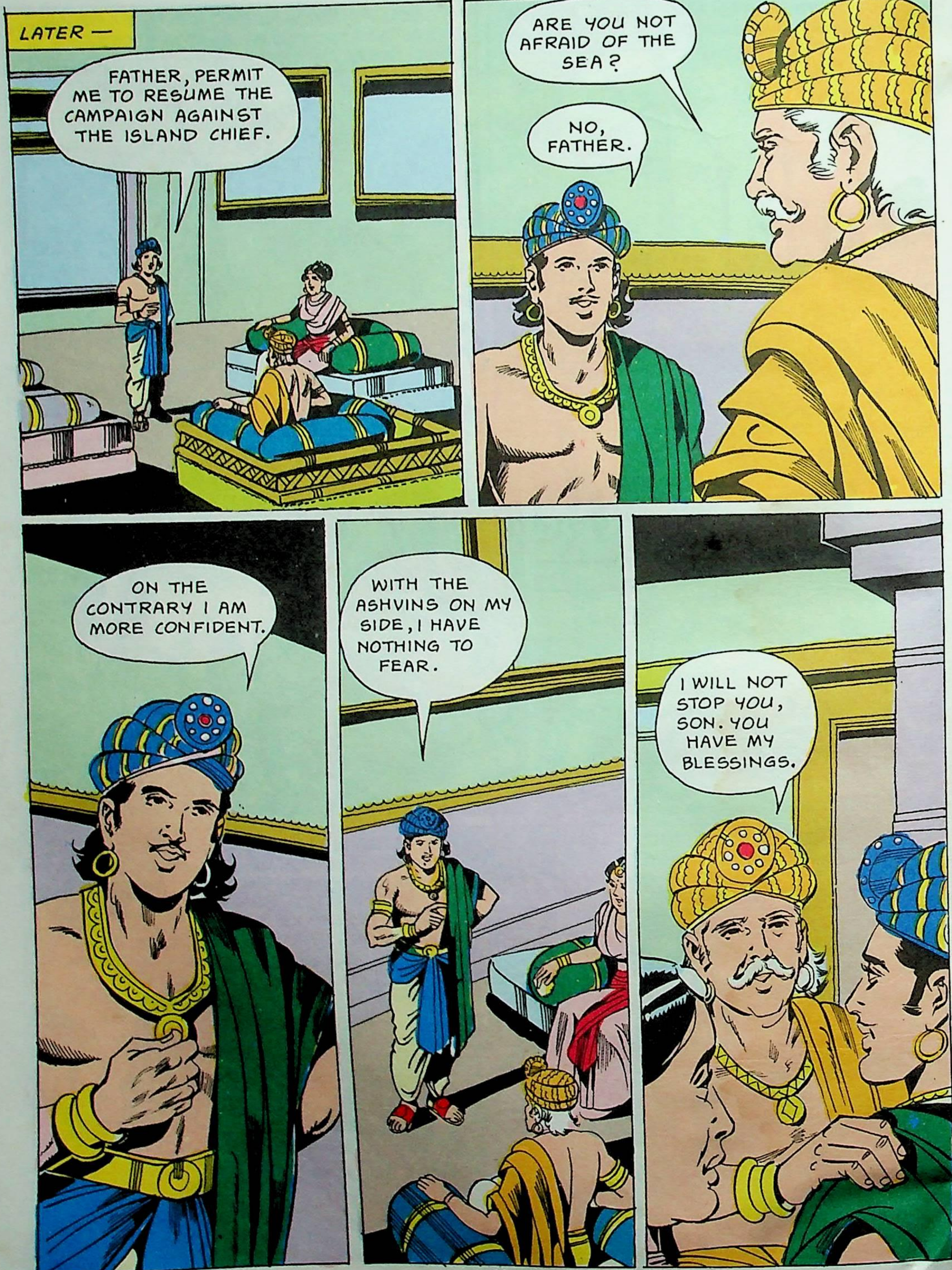
---

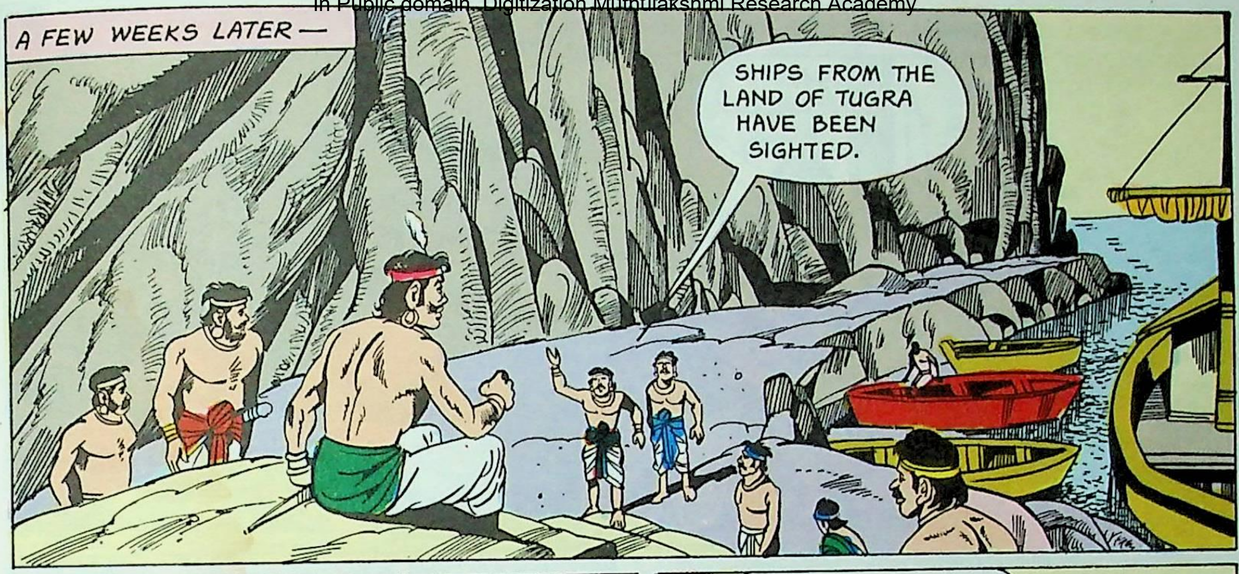
*VEHICLE

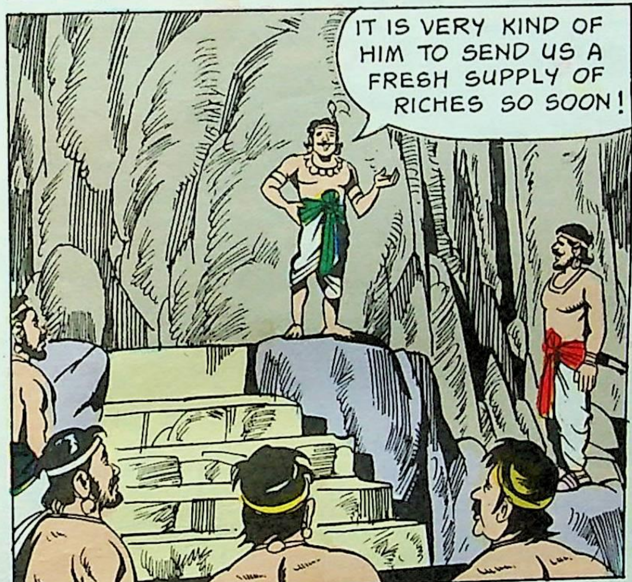

AT THAT MOMENT, NOT FAR OFF A FEW BOATS APPEARED.
CAN YOU SEE THAT SPECK ON THE WATER? IT SEEMS TO BE A HUMAN BEING.
IT MUST BE SOME HAPLESS, SHIP-WRECKED SAILOR!
ROW HARD IN THAT DIRECTION.

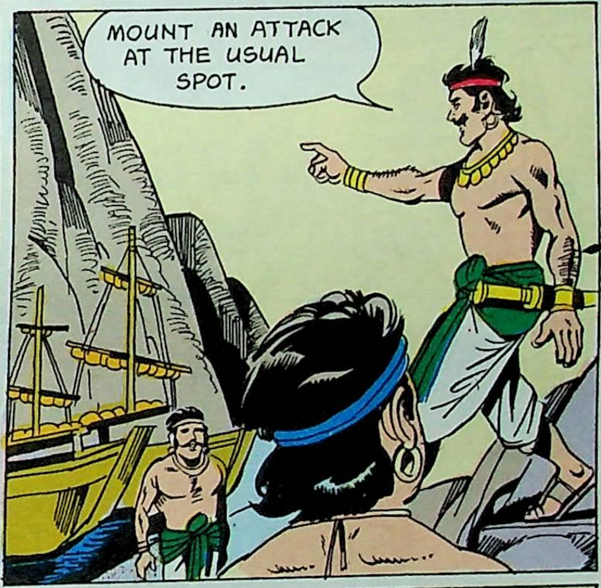

SOON —
HE IS UNCONSCIOUS.
WHEN BHUJYU AT LAST OPENED HIS EYES —
YOU MUST BE THE ASHVINS, THE MIGHTY HEROES, HELPERS OF ALL. ACCEPT MY SALUTATIONS!
THEN THE ASHVINS GAVE BHUJYU SOME HONEY, MILK AND SOMA AND HAD SOME THEMSELVES.

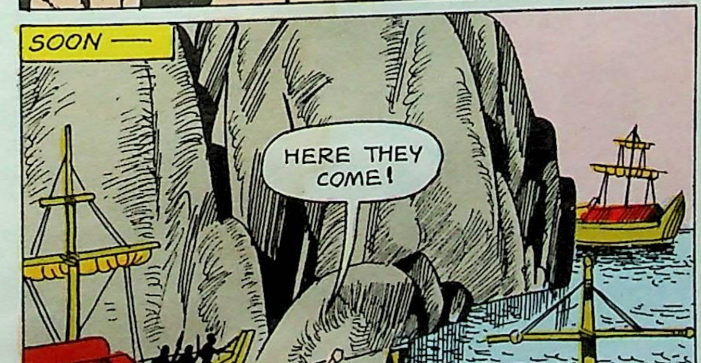

AFTER THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS, THEIR BOATS REACHED THE SHORES OF THE SINDHU LAND.
AS SOON AS THEY HEARD OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE BOATS, TUGRA AND HIS QUEEN CAME THERE.
BHUJYU! OH, BHUJYU! MY SON!
O MOTHER, I AM SAFE! ALIVE!
BY THE TIME THE REUNITED FAMILY LOOKED UP, THE BOATS WITH THE TWINS IN THEM HAD RECEDED INTO THE HORIZON.
O ASHVINS, EVER-VIGILANT HELPERS OF MANKIND, YOU SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR AN OFFERING OF SOMA AND HONEY!

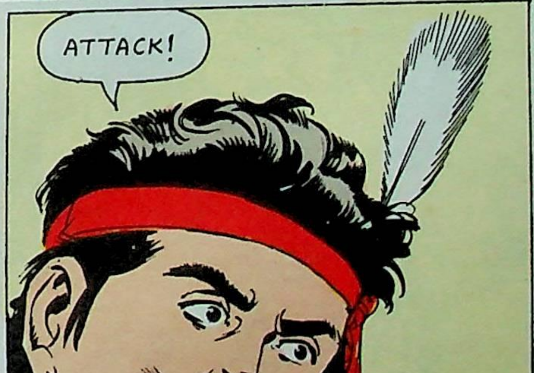

LATER —
FATHER, PERMIT ME TO RESUME THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ISLAND CHIEF.
ARE YOU NOT AFRAID OF THE SEA?
NO, FATHER.
ON THE CONTRARY I AM MORE CONFIDENT.
WITH THE ASHVINS ON MY SIDE, I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR.
I WILL NOT STOP YOU, SON. YOU HAVE MY BLESSINGS.

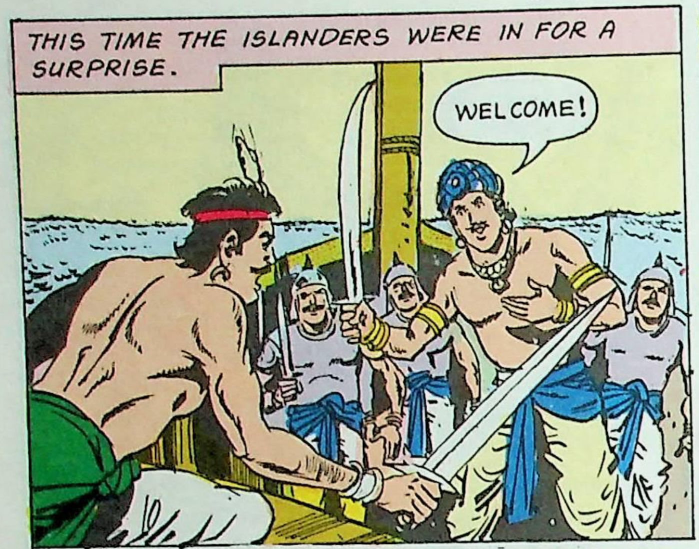

A FEW WEEKS LATER —
SHIPS FROM THE LAND OF TUGRA HAVE BEEN SIGHTED.

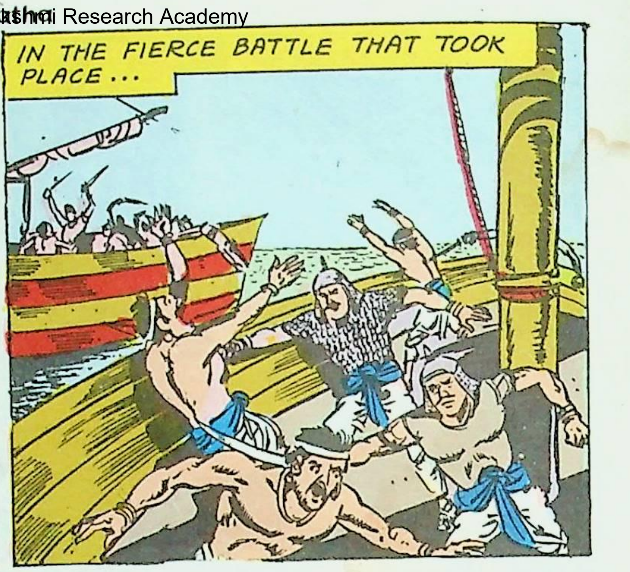

IT IS VERY KIND OF HIM TO SEND US A FRESH SUPPLY OF RICHES SO SOON!

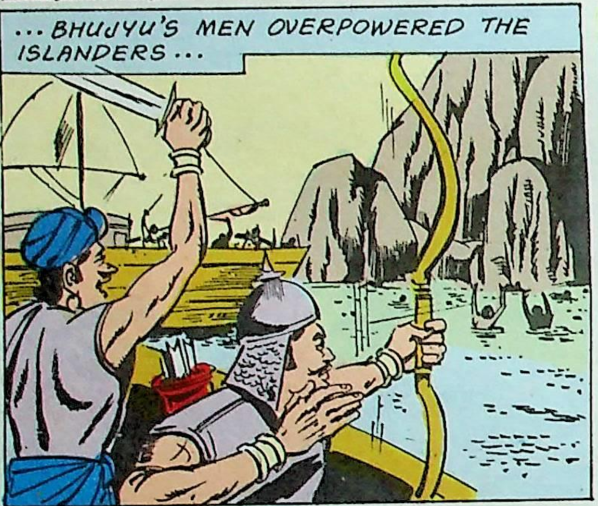

MOUNT AN ATTACK AT THE USUAL SPOT.

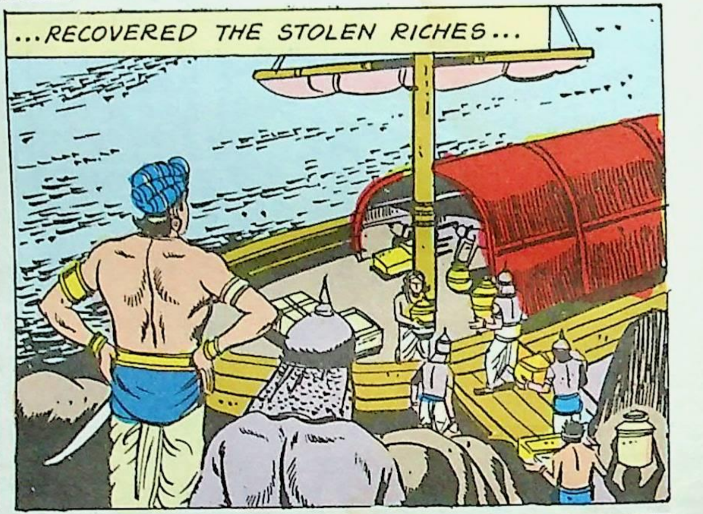

SOON —
HERE THEY COME!

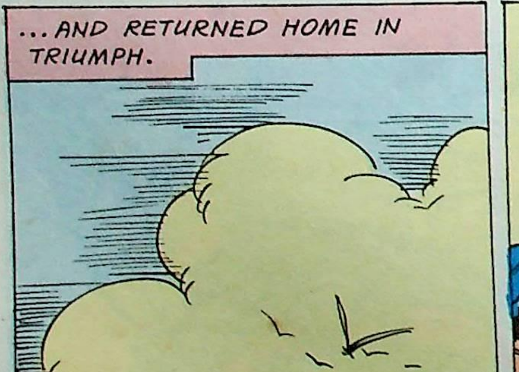

ATTACK!

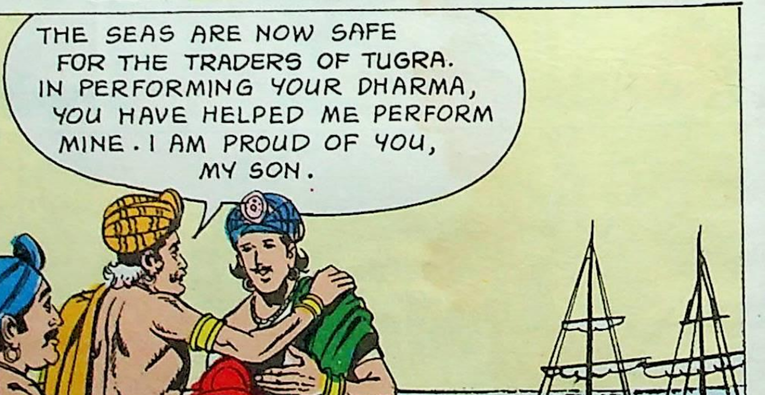

THIS TIME THE ISLANDERS WERE IN FOR A SURPRISE.
WELCOME!

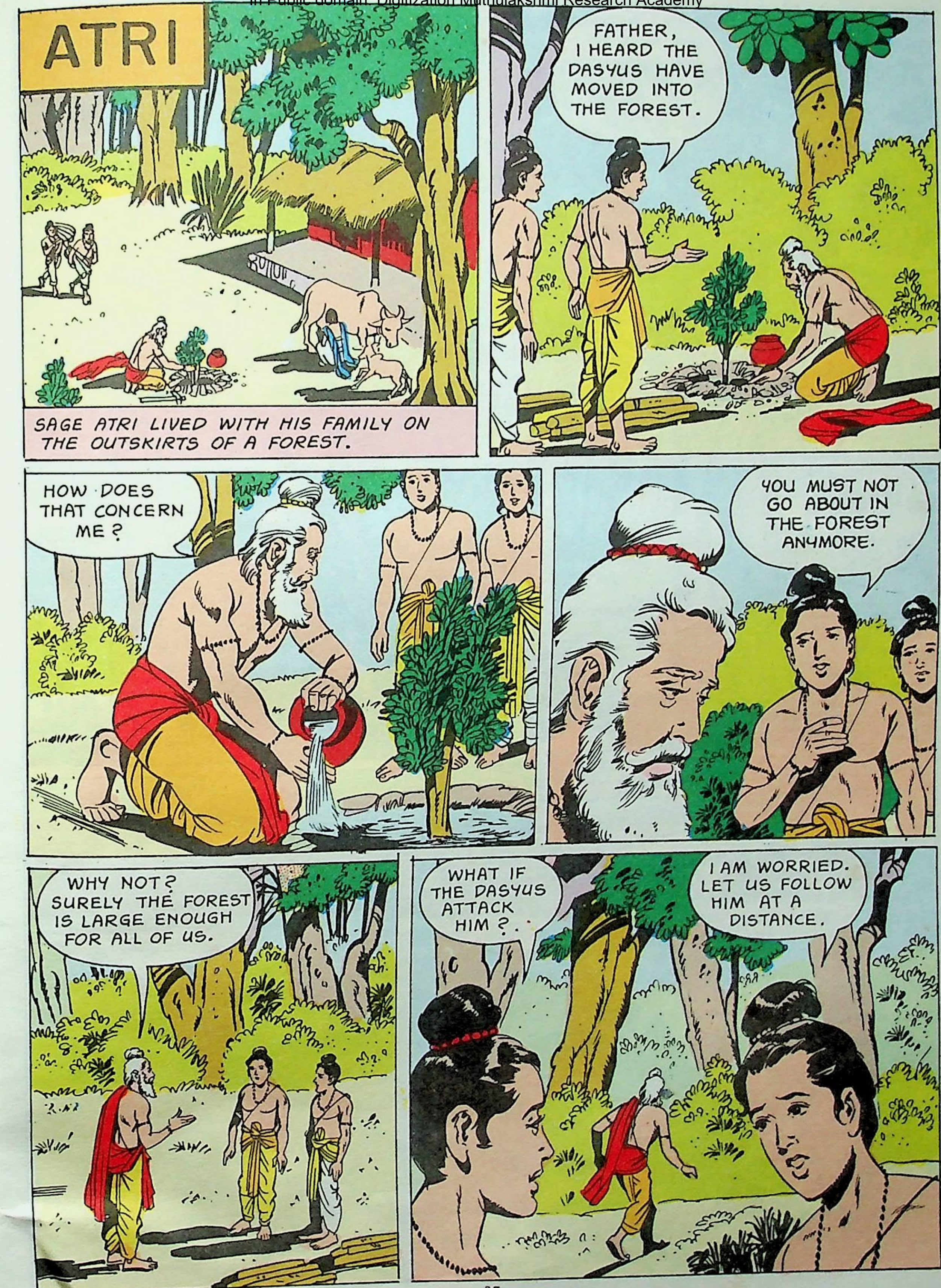

IN THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT TOOK PLACE ...

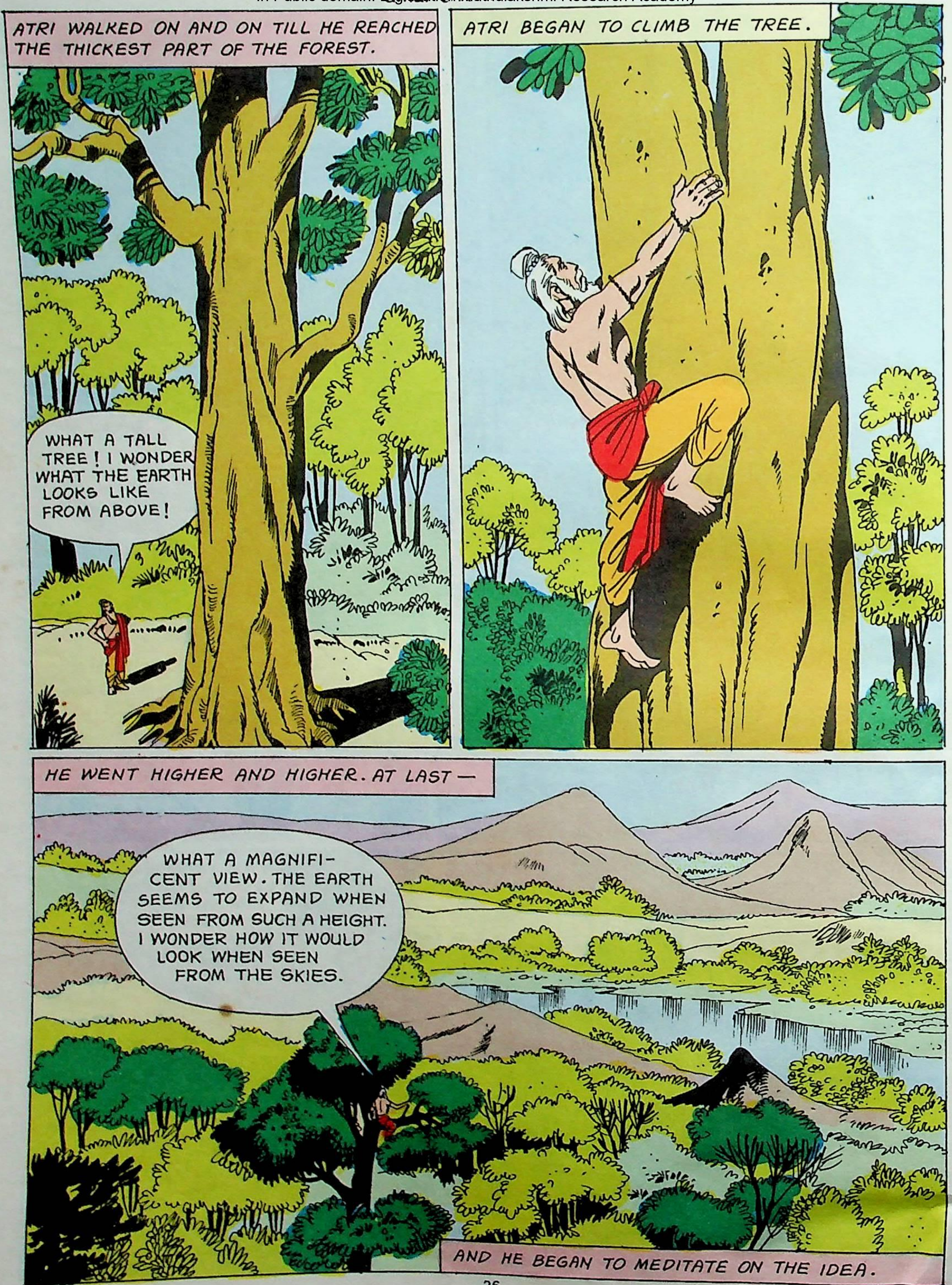

... BHUJYU'S MEN OVERPOWERED THE ISLANDERS ...

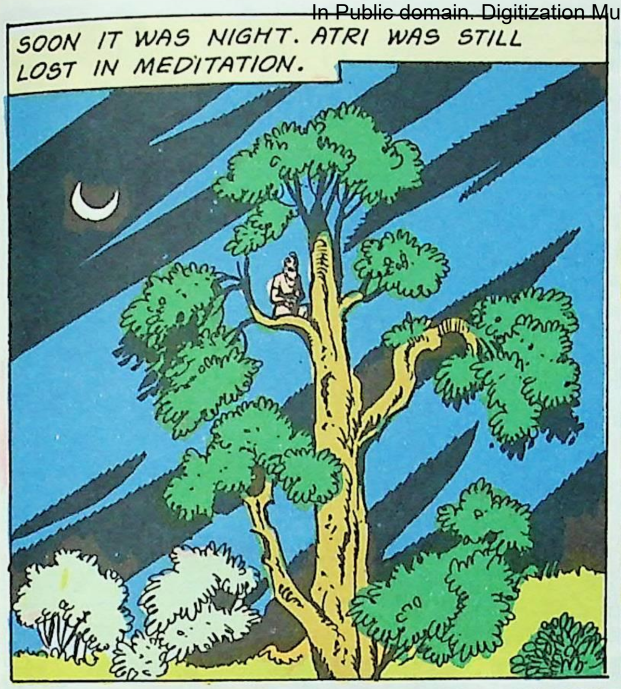

... RECOVERED THE STOLEN RICHES ...

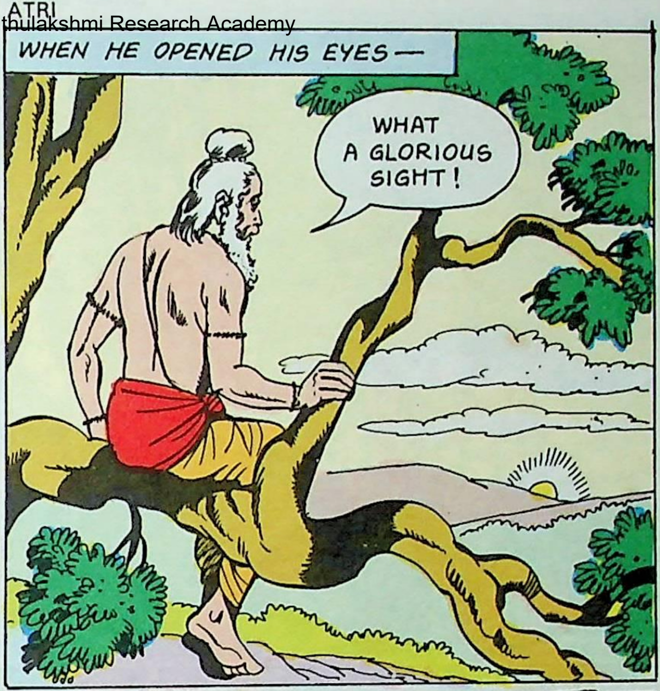

... AND RETURNED HOME IN TRIUMPH.

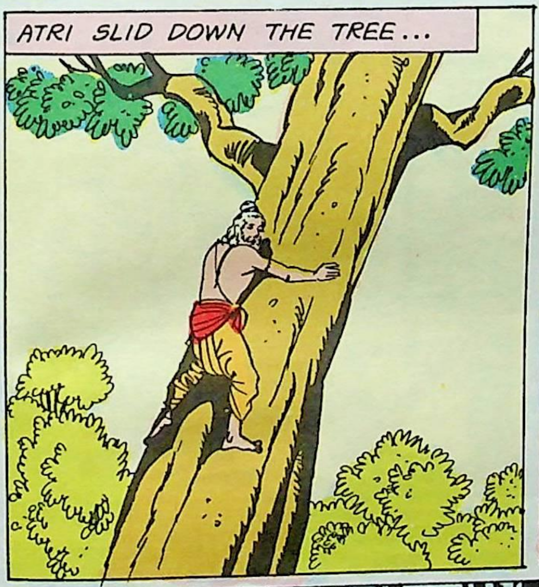

THE SEAS ARE NOW SAFE FOR THE TRADERS OF TUGRA. IN PERFORMING YOUR DHARMA, YOU HAVE HELPED ME PERFORM MINE. I AM PROUD OF YOU, MY SON.

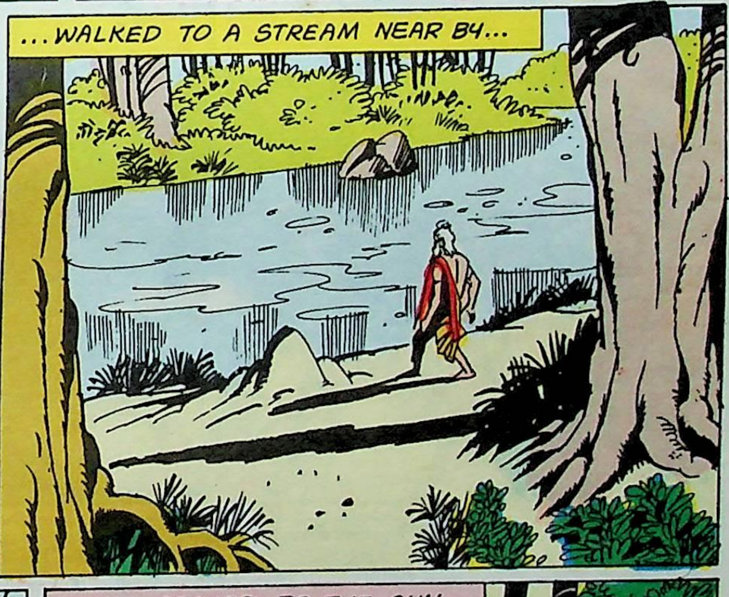

ATRI
SAGE ATRI LIVED WITH HIS FAMILY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A FOREST.
FATHER, I HEARD THE DASYUS HAVE MOVED INTO THE FOREST.
HOW DOES THAT CONCERN ME?
YOU MUST NOT GO ABOUT IN THE FOREST ANYMORE.
WHY NOT? SURELY THE FOREST IS LARGE ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US.
WHAT IF THE DASYUS ATTACK HIM?
I AM WORRIED. LET US FOLLOW HIM AT A DISTANCE.

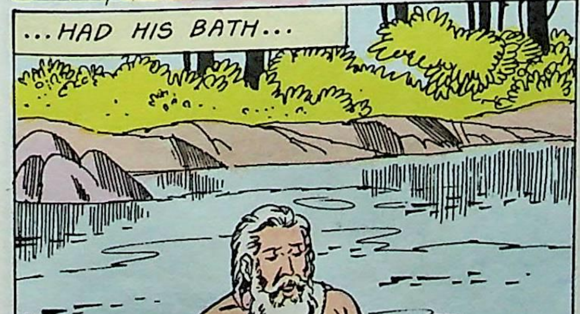

ATRI WALKED ON AND ON TILL HE REACHED THE THICKEST PART OF THE FOREST.
WHAT A TALL TREE! I WONDER WHAT THE EARTH LOOKS LIKE FROM ABOVE!
ATRI BEGAN TO CLIMB THE TREE.
HE WENT HIGHER AND HIGHER. AT LAST —
WHAT A MAGNIFICENT VIEW. THE EARTH SEEMS TO EXPAND WHEN SEEN FROM SUCH A HEIGHT. I WONDER HOW IT WOULD LOOK WHEN SEEN FROM THE SKIES.
AND HE BEGAN TO MEDITATE ON THE IDEA.

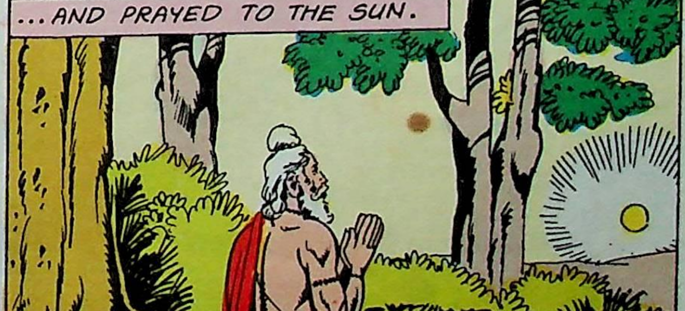

SOON IT WAS NIGHT. ATRI WAS STILL LOST IN MEDITATION.


WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES—
WHAT A GLORIOUS SIGHT!

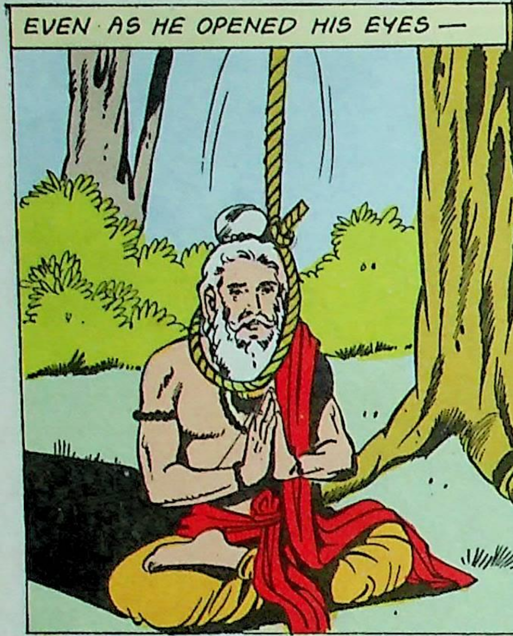

ATRI SLID DOWN THE TREE...

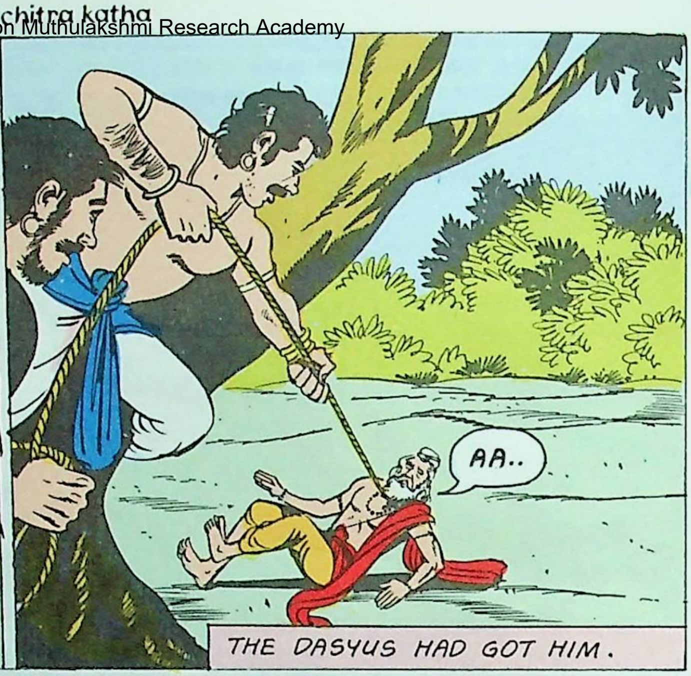

...WALKED TO A STREAM NEAR BY...


...HAD HIS BATH...


...AND PRAYED TO THE SUN.

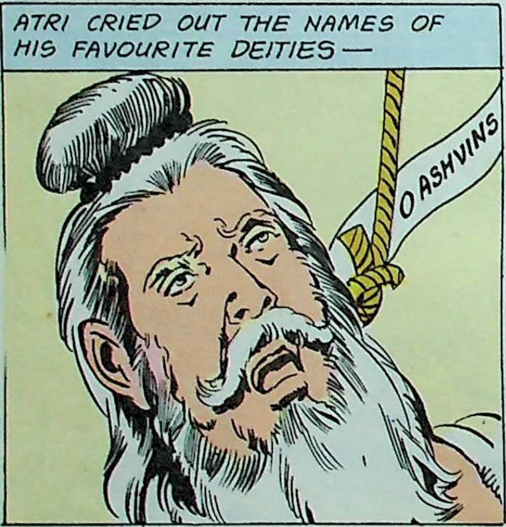
EVEN AS HE OPENED HIS EYES —

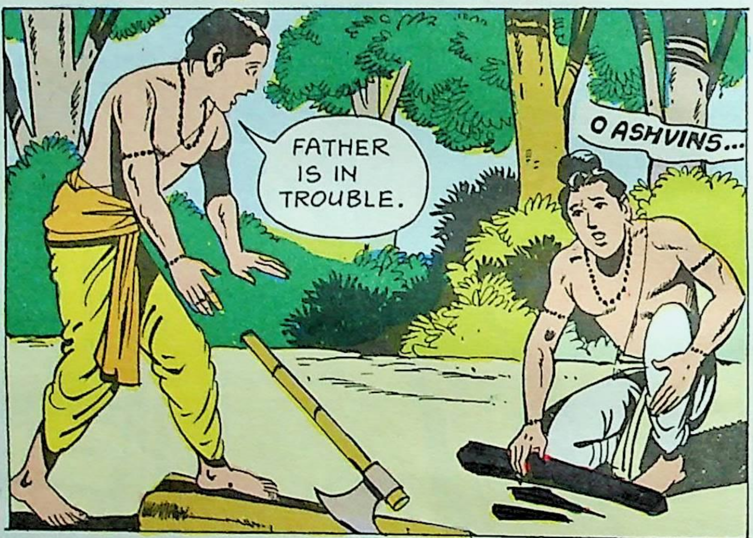


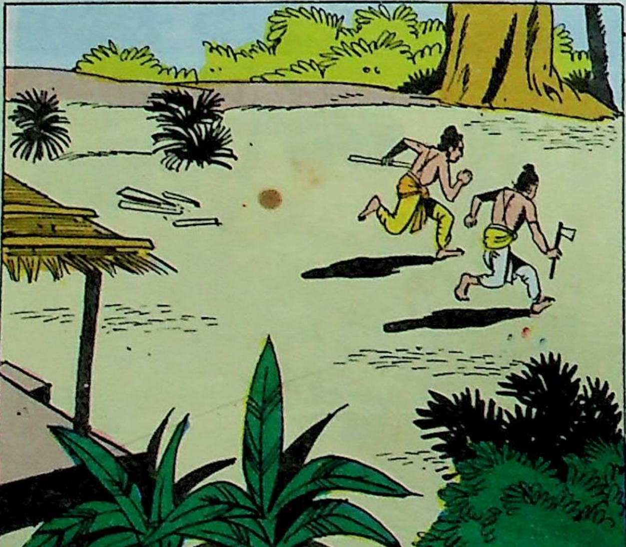


THE DASYUS HAD GOT HIM.

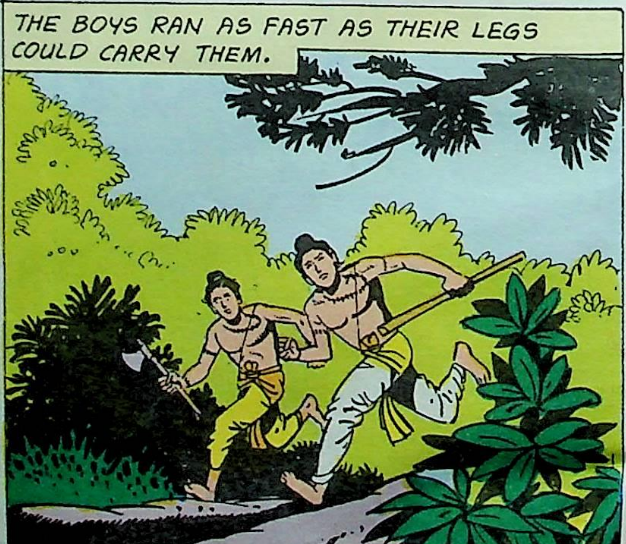
ATRI CRIED OUT THE NAMES OF HIS FAVOURITE DEITIES —

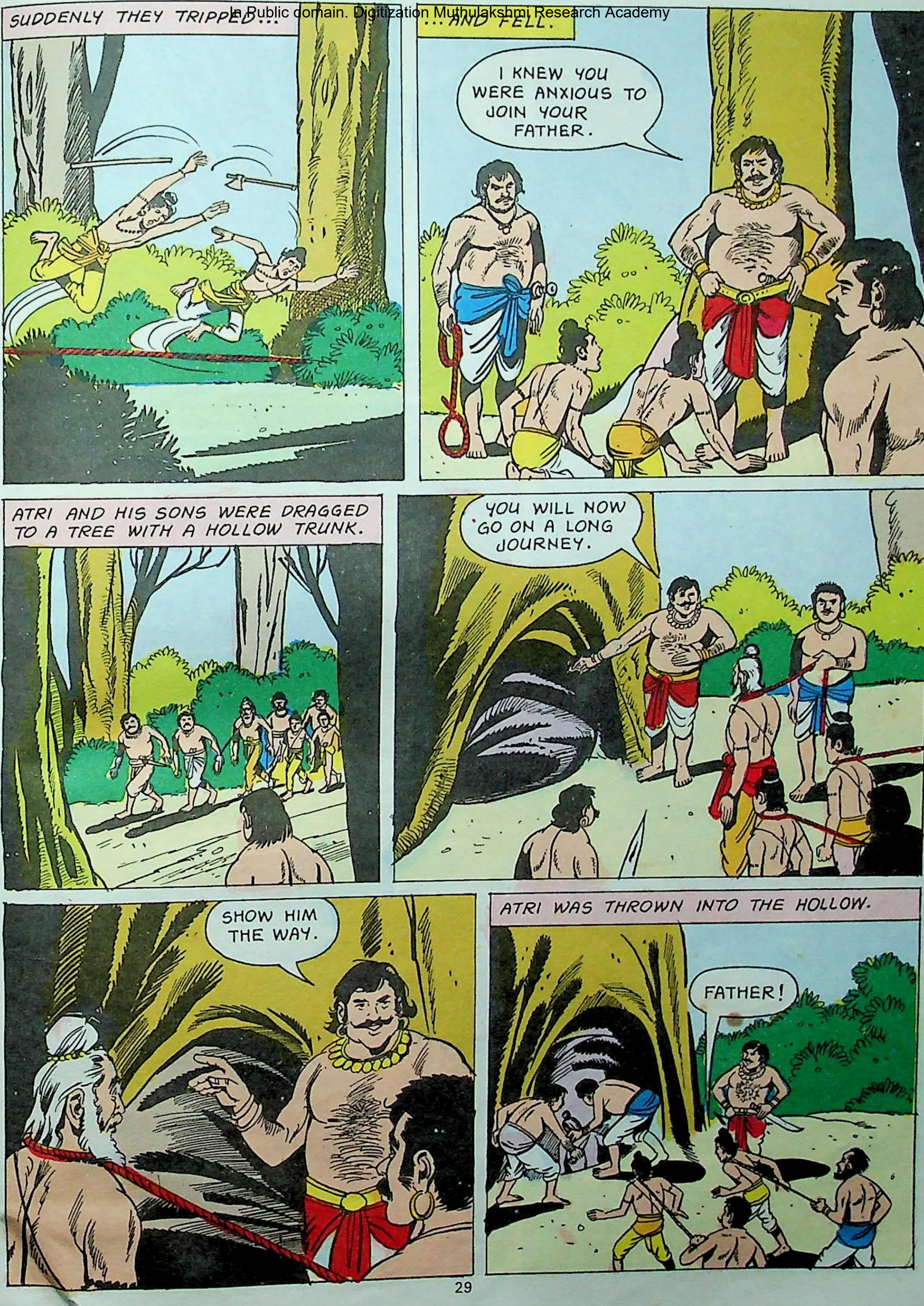


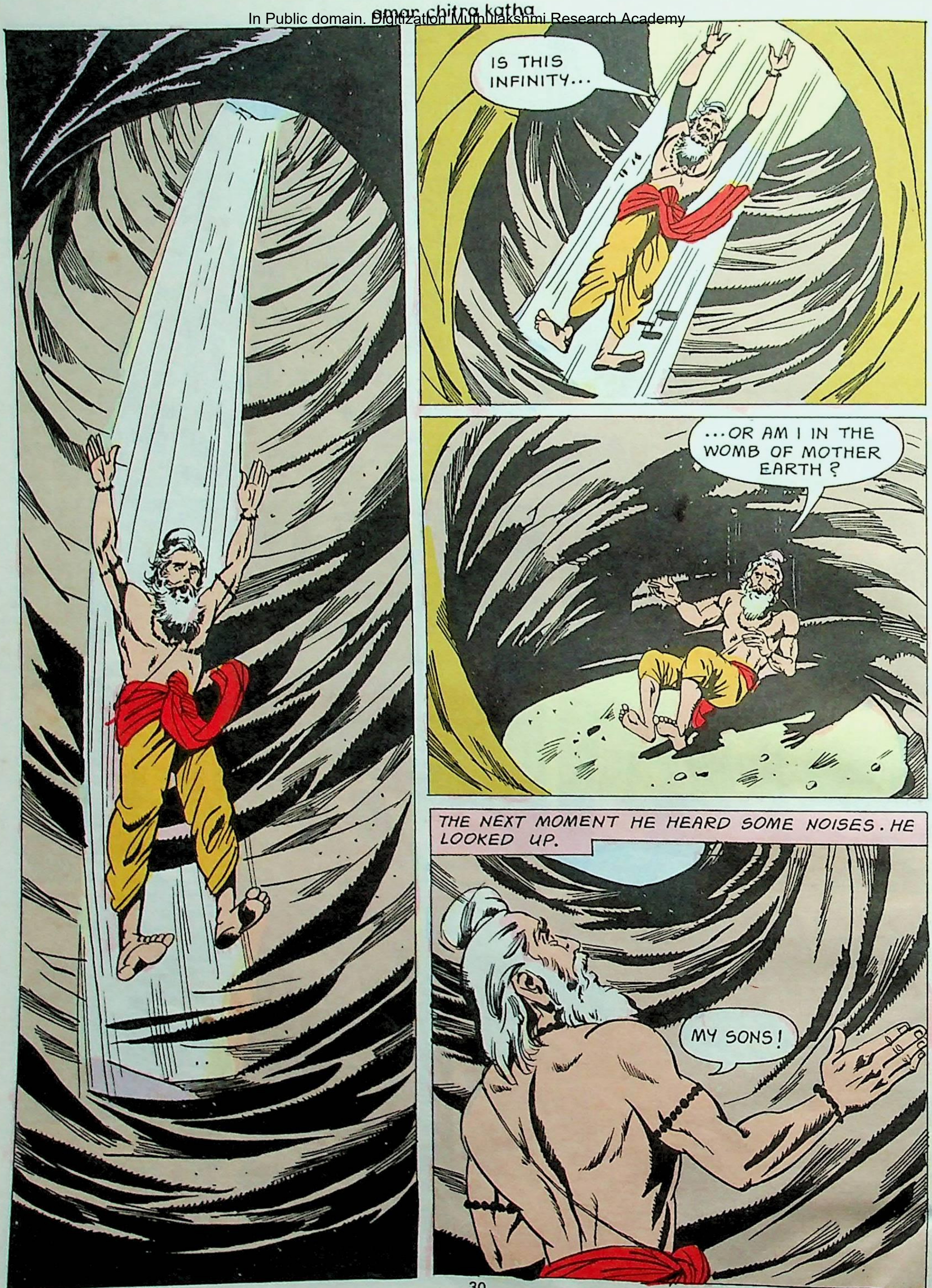

FATHER IS IN TROUBLE.
O ASHVINS...



THE BOYS RAN AS FAST AS THEIR LEGS COULD CARRY THEM.

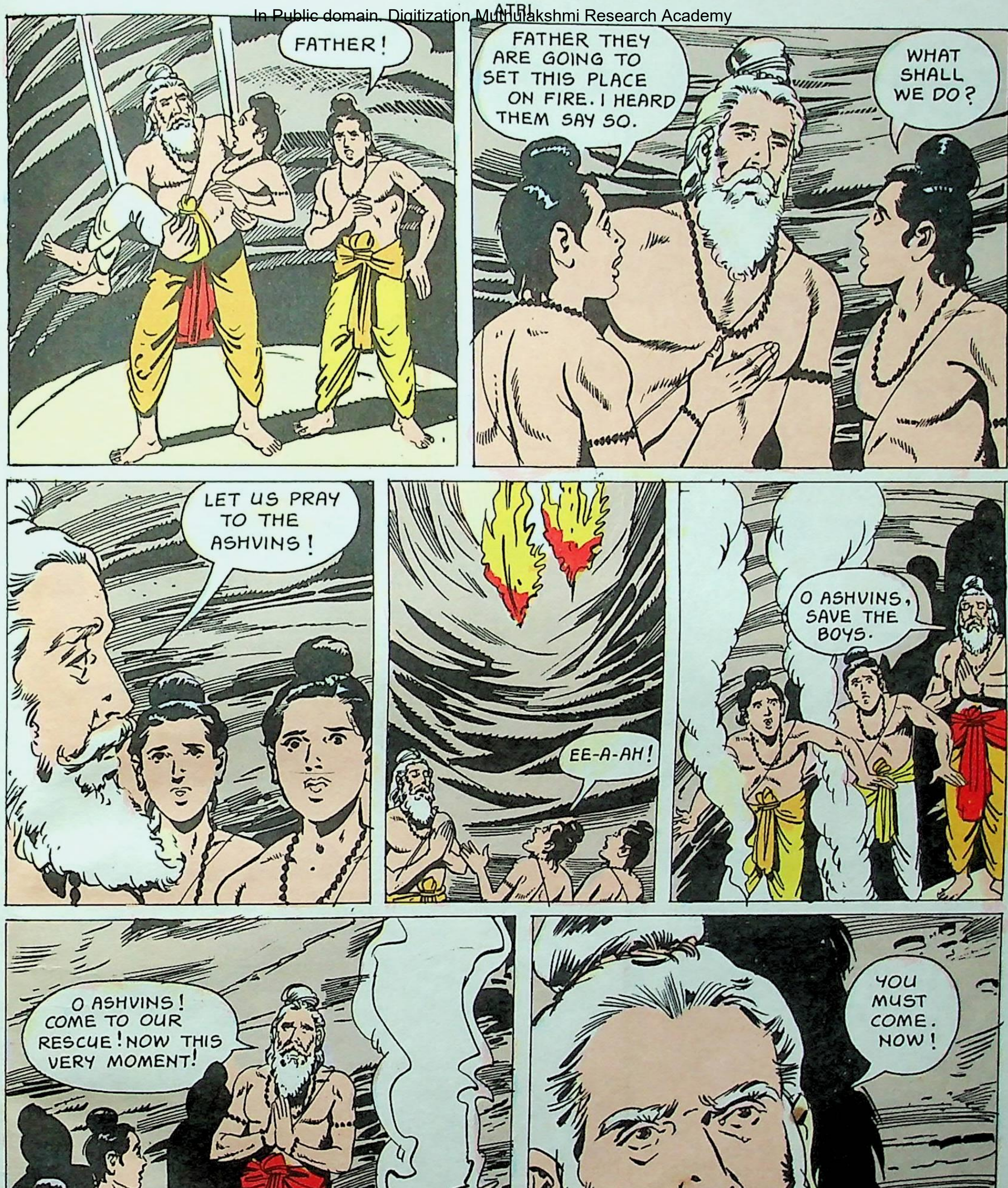



SUDDENLY THEY TRIPPED...
...AND FELL.
I KNEW YOU WERE ANXIOUS TO JOIN YOUR FATHER.
ATRI AND HIS SONS WERE DRAGGED TO A TREE WITH A HOLLOW TRUNK.
YOU WILL NOW GO ON A LONG JOURNEY.
SHOW HIM THE WAY.
ATRI WAS THROWN INTO THE HOLLOW.
FATHER!

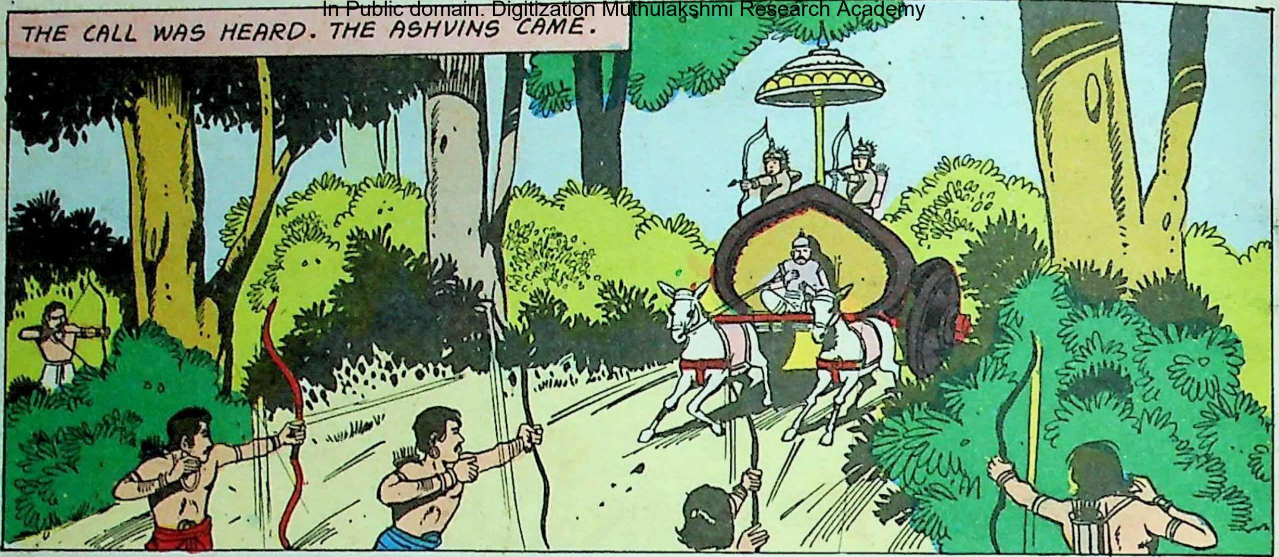

IS THIS INFINITY...
...OR AM I IN THE WOMB OF MOTHER EARTH?

THE NEXT MOMENT HE HEARD SOME NOISES. HE LOOKED UP.

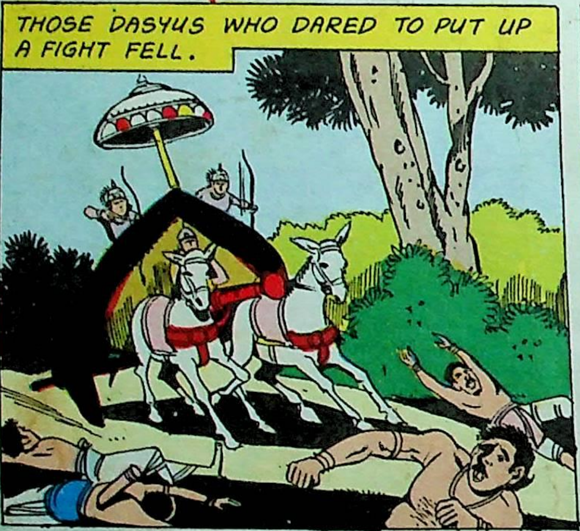
MY SONS!


FATHER!
FATHER THEY ARE GOING TO SET THIS PLACE ON FIRE. I HEARD THEM SAY SO.
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
LET US PRAY TO THE ASHVINS!
EE-A-AH!
O ASHVINS, SAVE THE BOYS.
O ASHVINS! COME TO OUR RESCUE! NOW THIS VERY MOMENT!
YOU MUST COME. NOW!

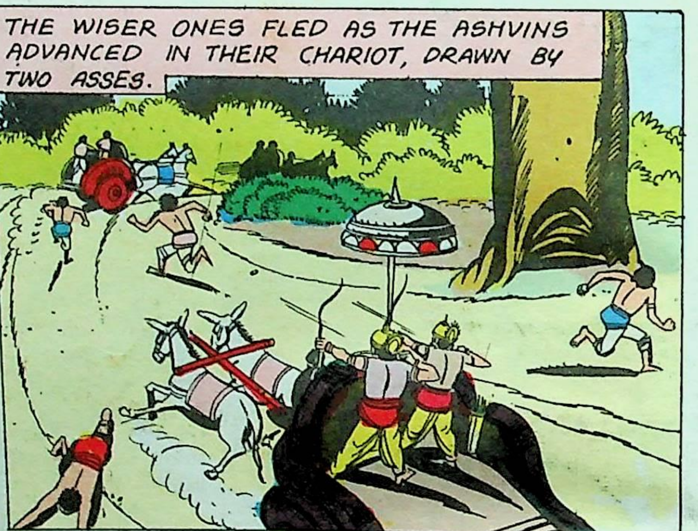
THE CALL WAS HEARD. THE ASHVINS CAME.



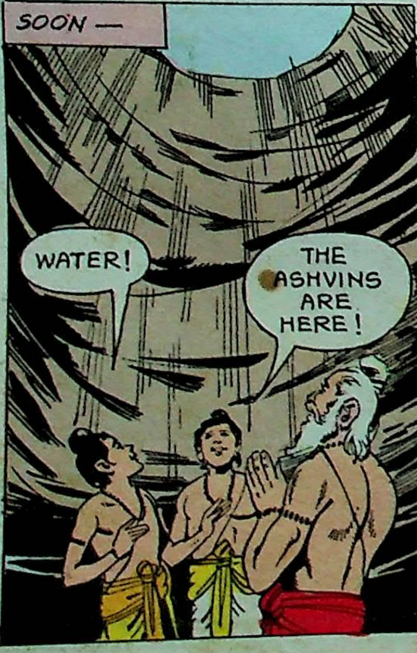
THOSE DASYUS WHO DARED TO PUT UP A FIGHT FELL.

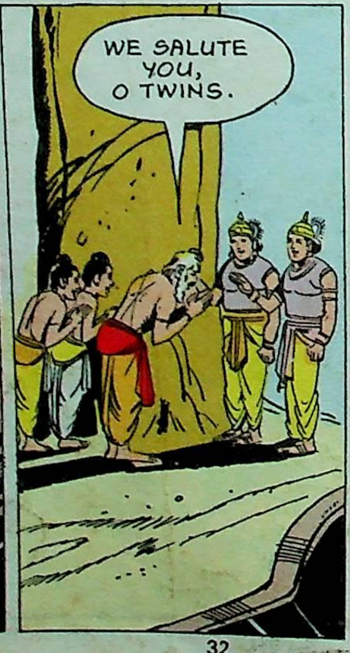


THE WISER ONES FLED AS THE ASHVINS ADVANCED IN THEIR CHARIOT, DRAWN BY TWO ASSES.

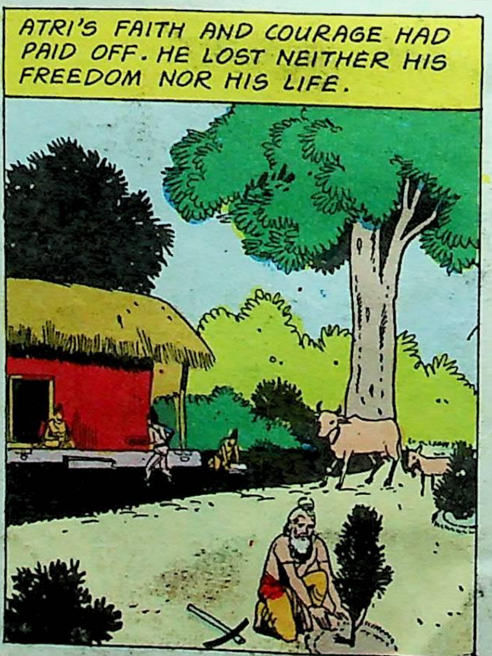


SOON —


WATER!
THE ASHVINS ARE HERE!


WE SALUTE YOU, O TWINS.

ATRI'S FAITH AND COURAGE HAD PAID OFF. HE LOST NEITHER HIS FREEDOM NOR HIS LIFE.



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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

THE
SYAMANTAKA GEM

To the women of Dwarka, Krishna is the most coveted jewel, the husband they yearn for. For most of the men, the Syamantaka, the sun-god's shining gem, is the most sought-after prize. This is hardly surprising – it is known to regularly bestow a hoard of solid gold on their Prince Satrajit. When the gem goes missing, suspicion falls on Krishna. He must prove his innocence, but danger and upheaval threaten at every turn.

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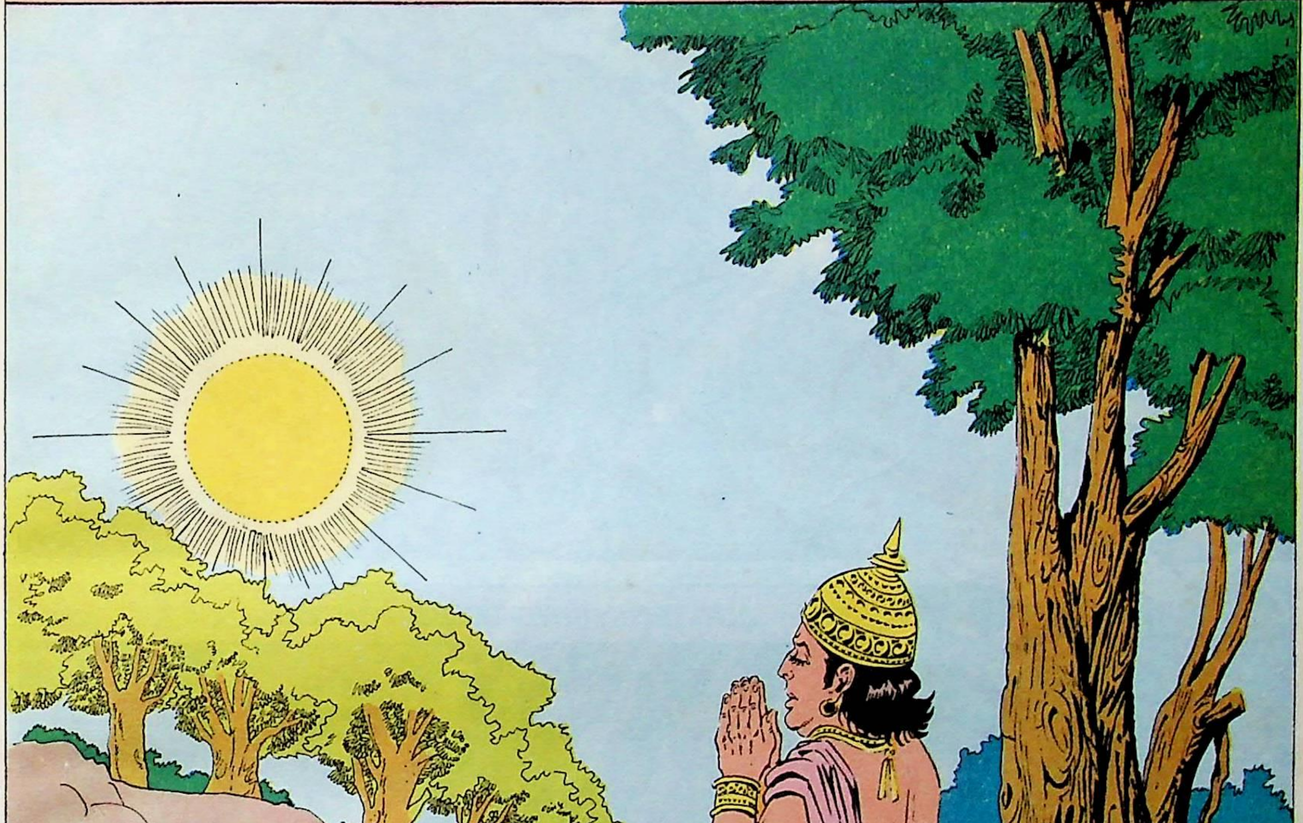
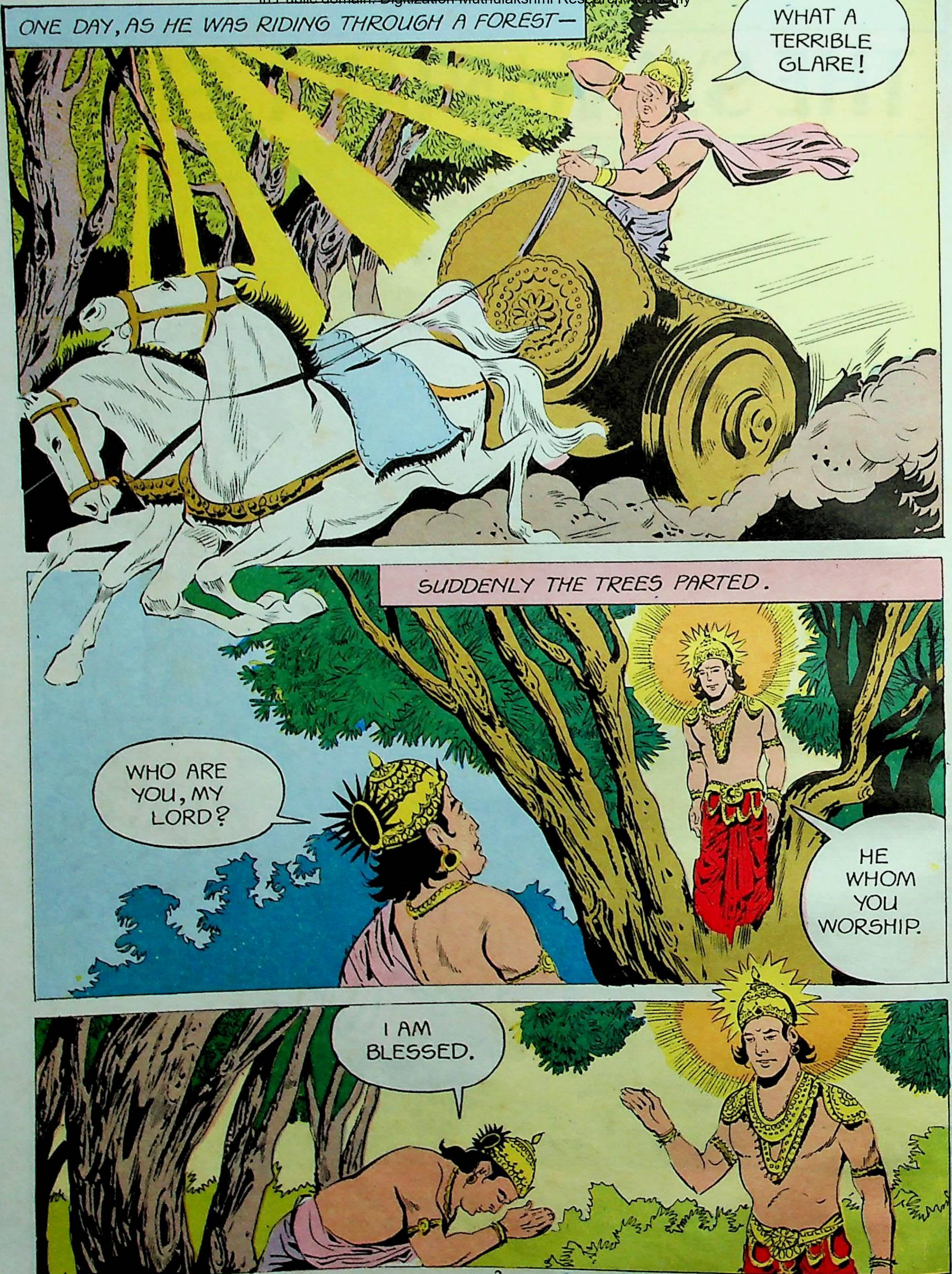
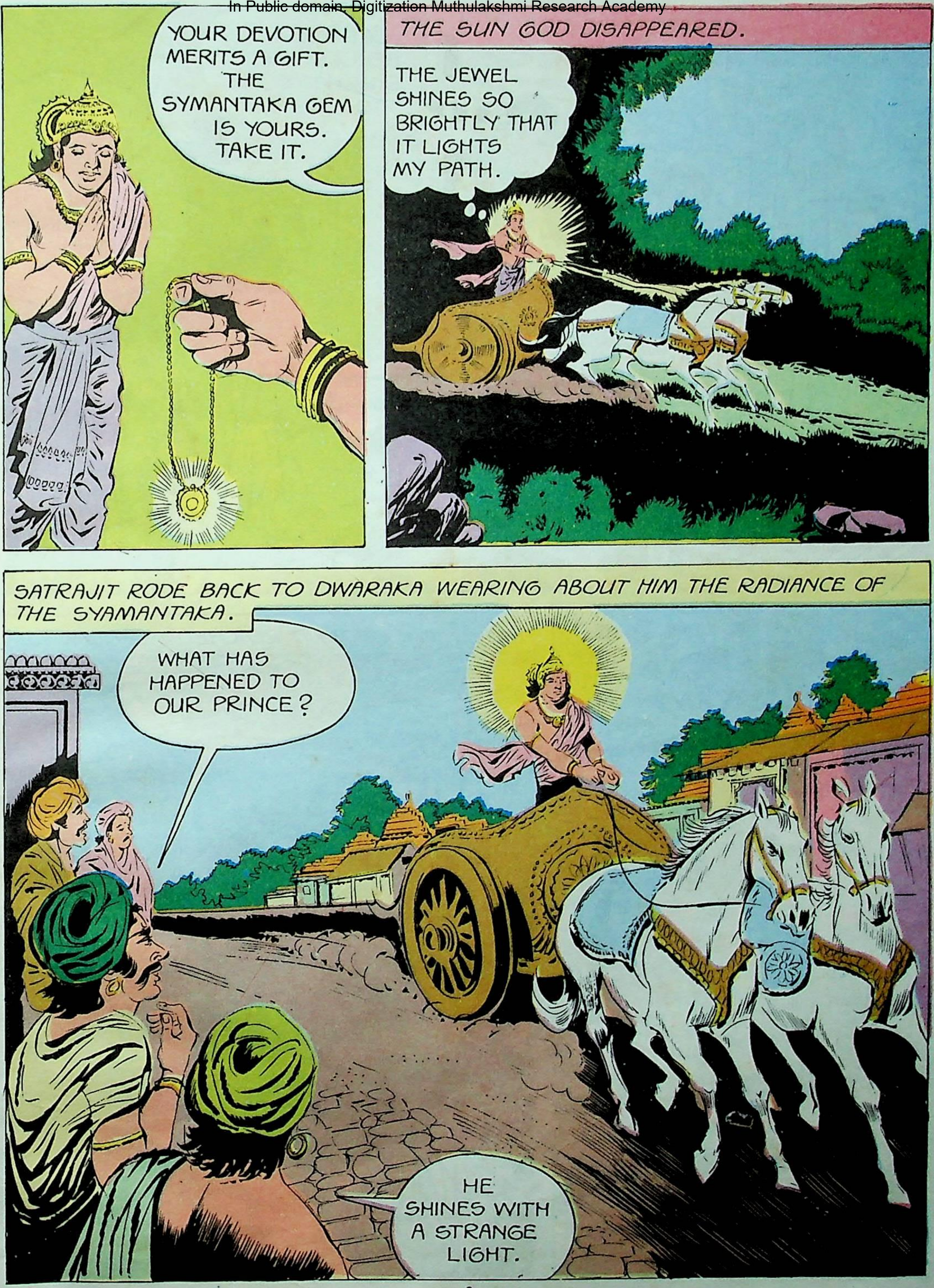
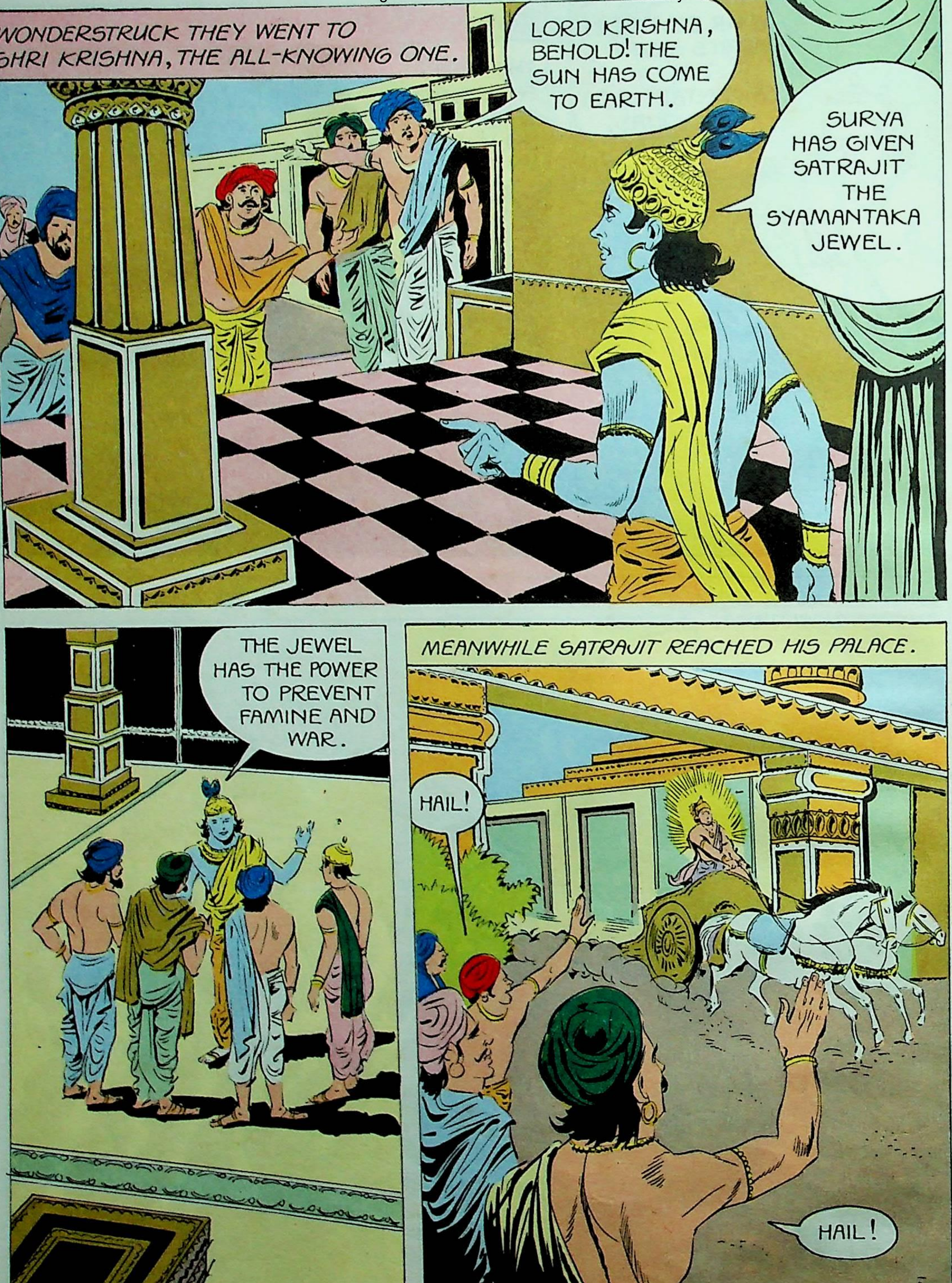
THE SYAMANTAKA GEM

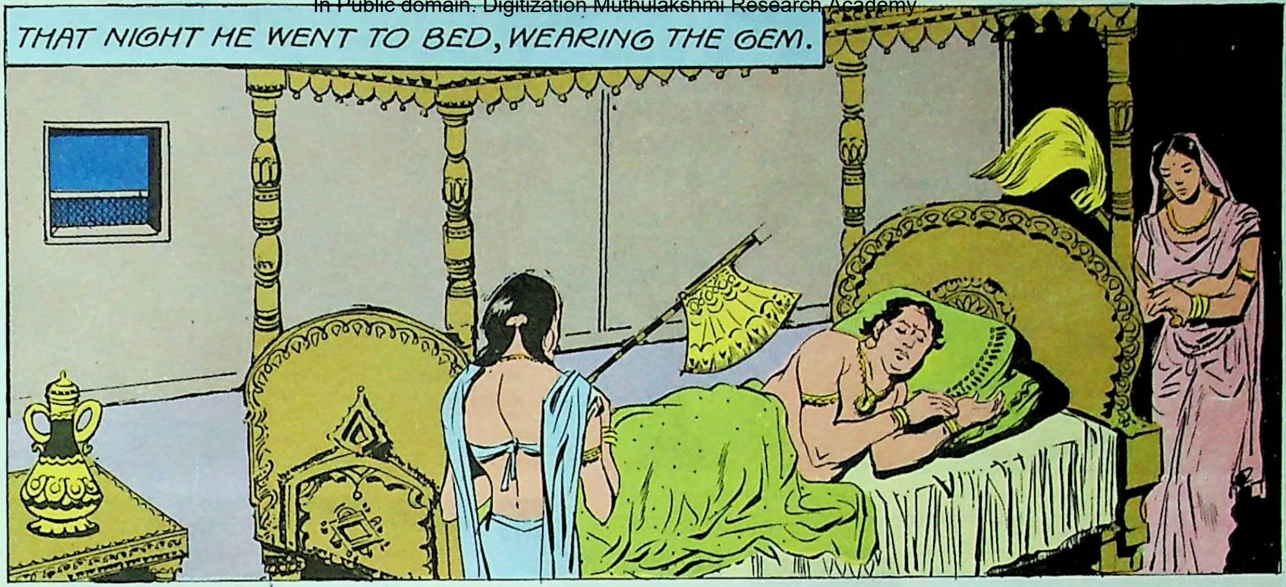


PRINCE SATRAJIT OF DWARAKA WAS A DEVOTEE OF SURYA, THE SUN GOD.

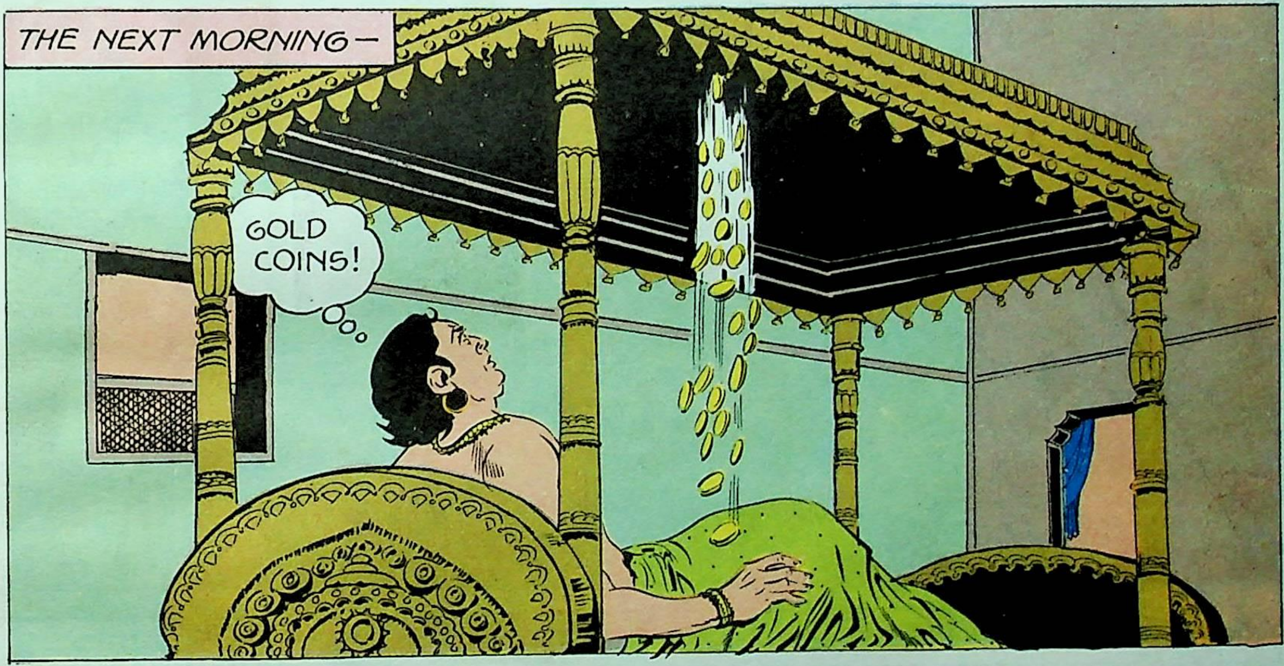

ONE DAY, AS HE WAS RIDING THROUGH A FOREST—
WHAT A TERRIBLE GLARE!
SUDDENLY THE TREES PARTED.
WHO ARE YOU, MY LORD?
HE WHOM YOU WORSHIP.
I AM BLESSED.


YOUR DEVOTION MERITS A GIFT. THE SYMANTAKA GEM IS YOURS. TAKE IT.
THE SUN GOD DISAPPEARED.
THE JEWEL SHINES SO BRIGHTLY THAT IT LIGHTS MY PATH.
SATRAJIT RODE BACK TO DWARAKA WEARING ABOUT HIM THE RADIANCE OF THE SYAMANTAKA.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR PRINCE?
HE SHINES WITH A STRANGE LIGHT.

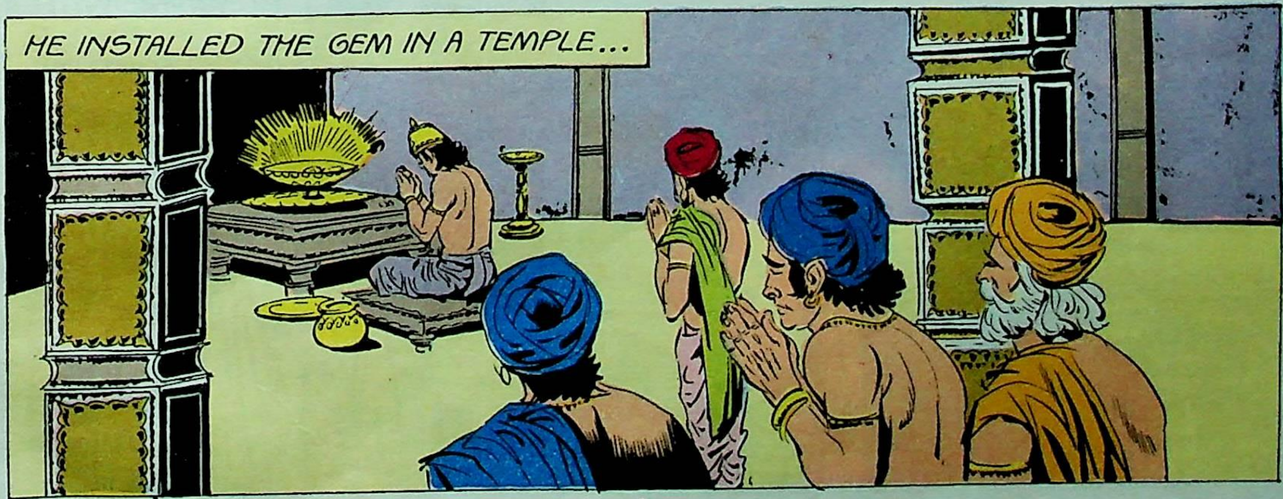

WONDERSTRUCK THEY WENT TO SHRI KRISHNA, THE ALL-KNOWING ONE.
LORD KRISHNA, BEHOLD! THE SUN HAS COME TO EARTH.
SURYA HAS GIVEN SATRAJIT THE SYAMANTAKA JEWEL.
THE JEWEL HAS THE POWER TO PREVENT FAMINE AND WAR.
MEANWHILE SATRAJIT REACHED HIS PALACE.
HAIL!
HAIL!



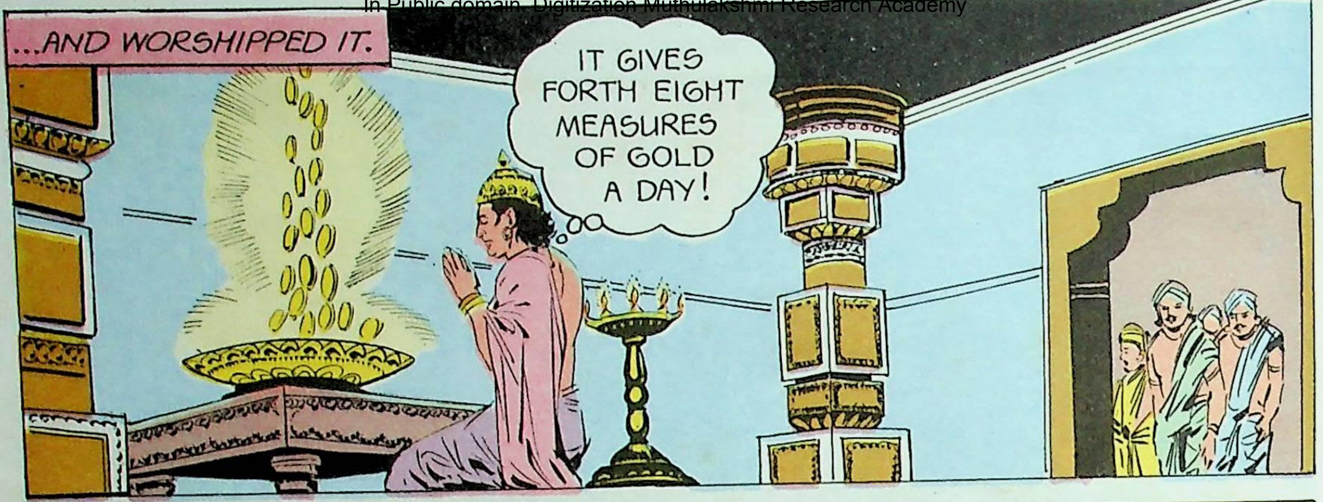
THAT NIGHT HE WENT TO BED, WEARING THE GEM.

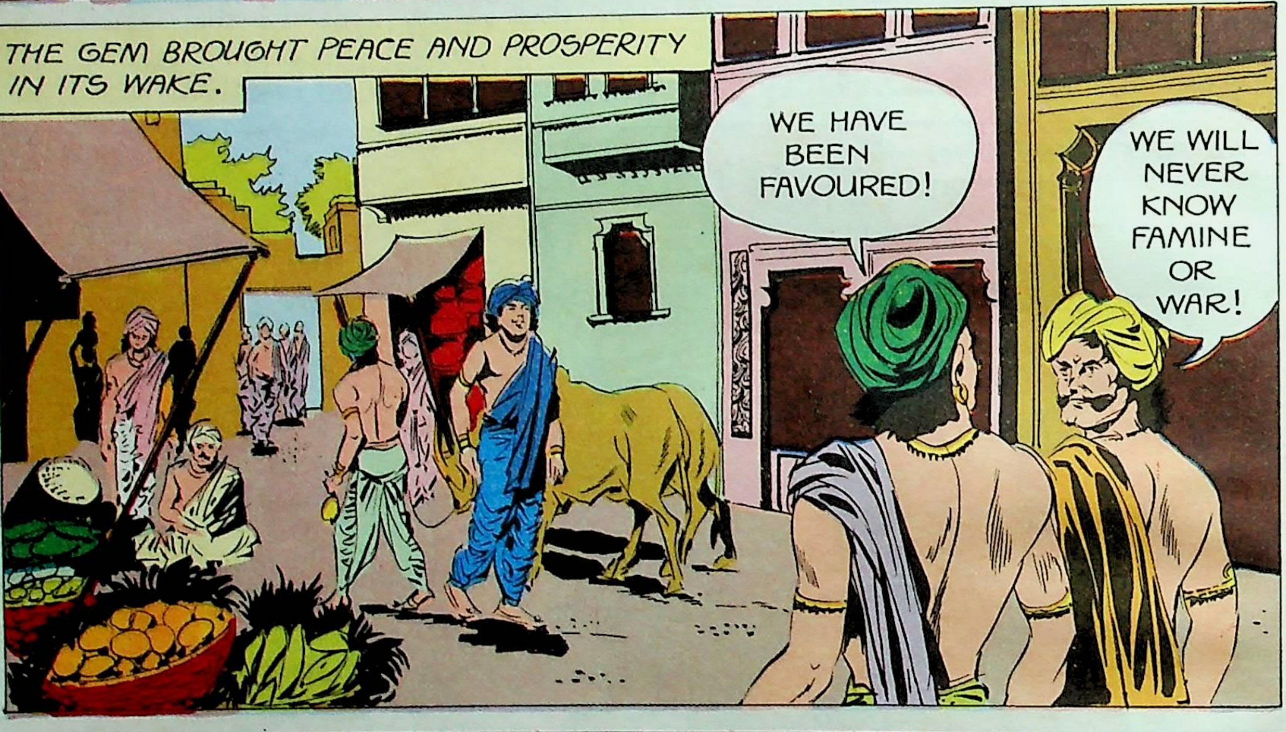


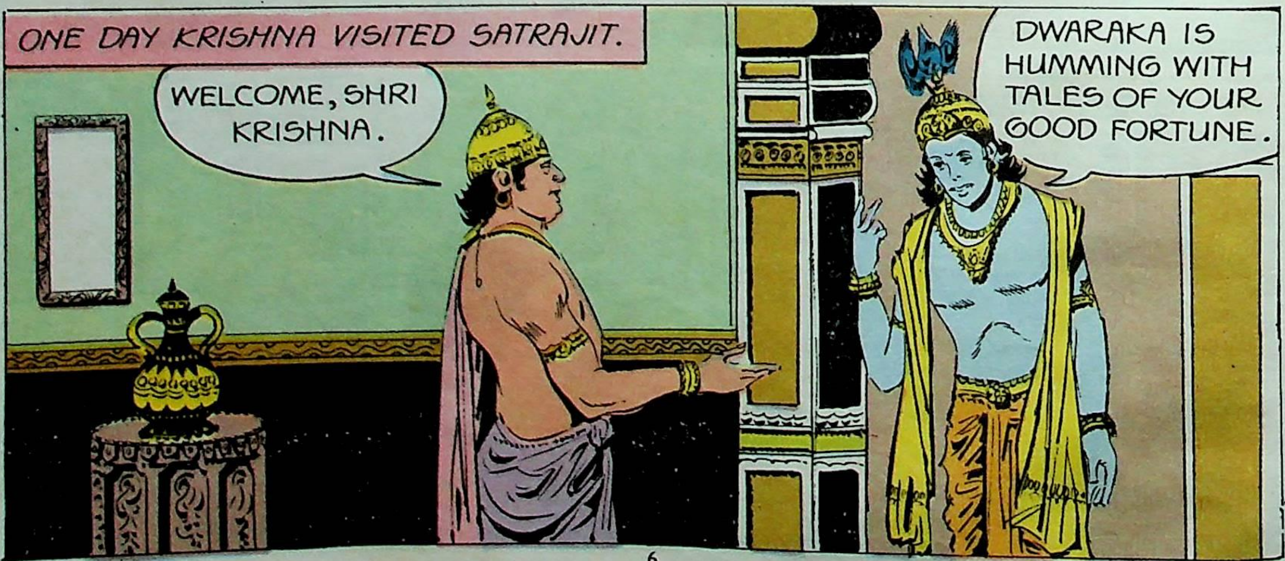
THE NEXT MORNING—

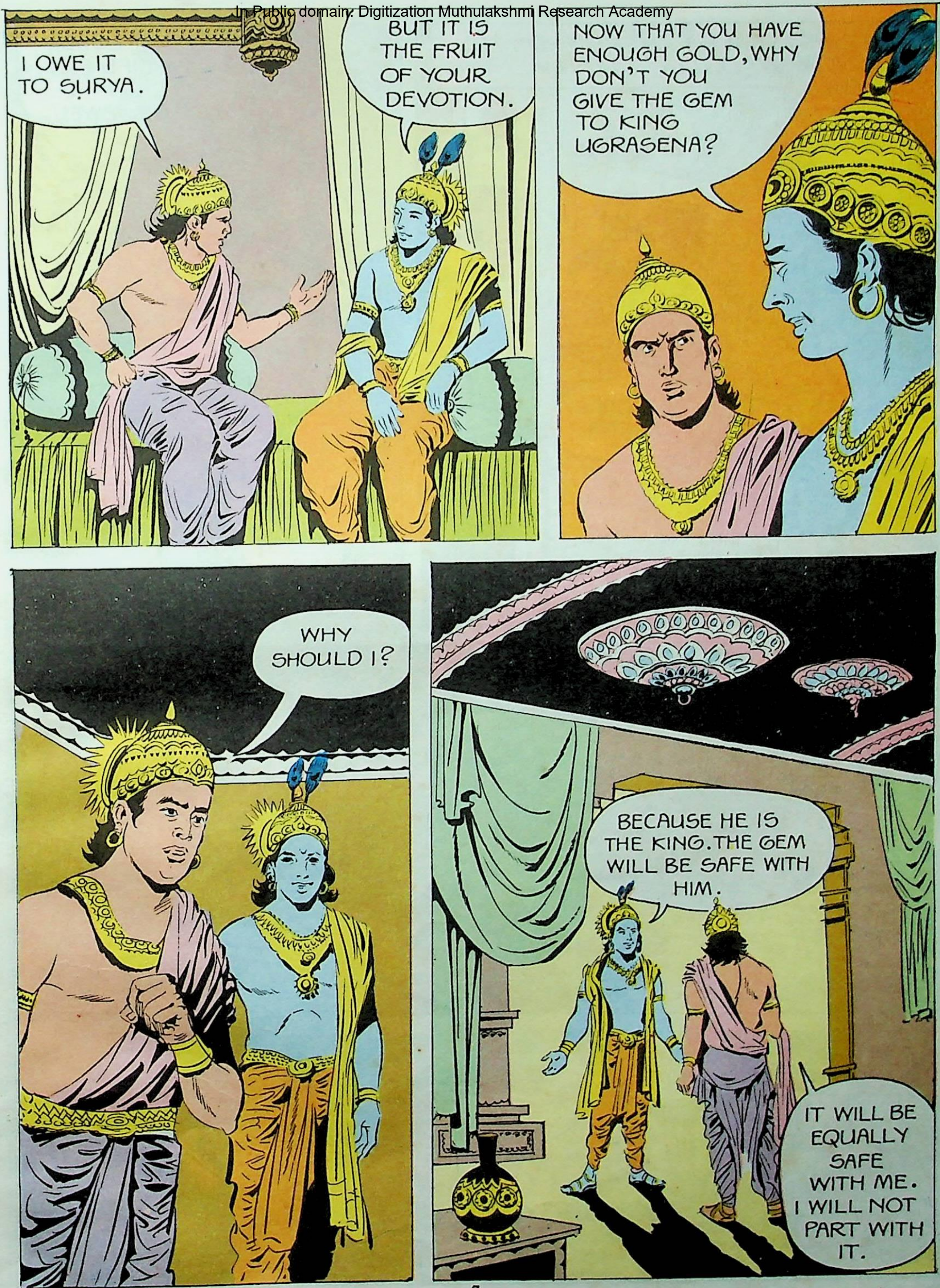


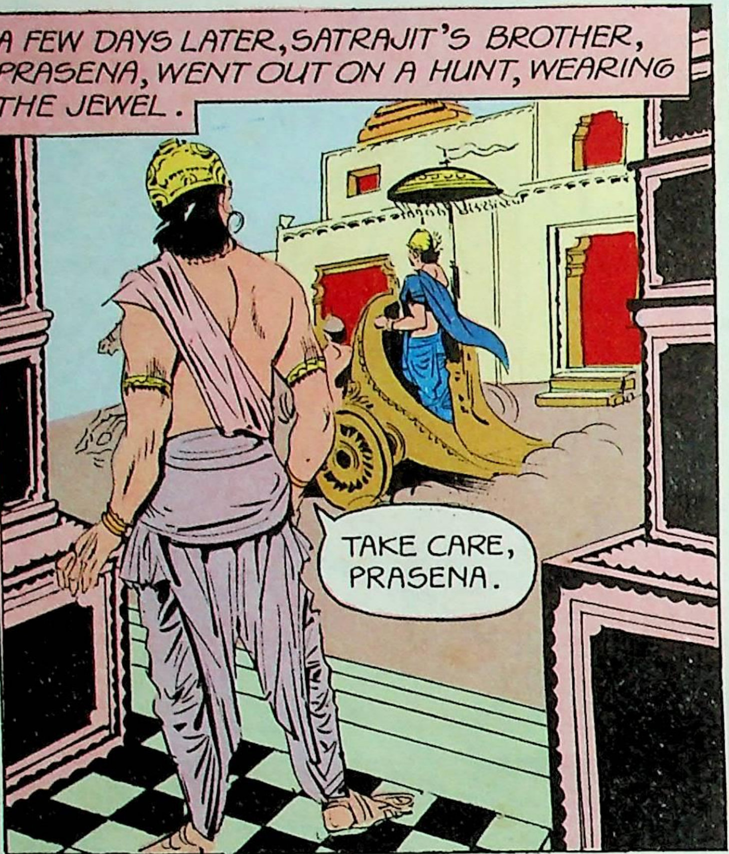
HE INSTALLED THE GEM IN A TEMPLE...


...AND WORSHIPPED IT.
IT GIVES FORTH EIGHT MEASURES OF GOLD A DAY!


THE GEM BROUGHT PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN ITS WAKE.
WE HAVE BEEN FAVOURED!
WE WILL NEVER KNOW FAMINE OR WAR!

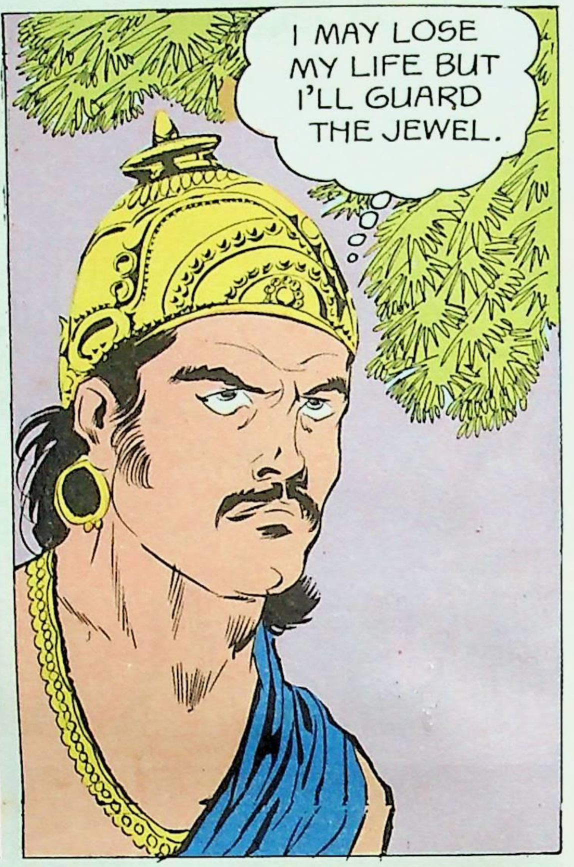

ONE DAY KRISHNA VISITED SATRAJIT.
WELCOME, SHRI KRISHNA.
DWARAKA IS HUMMING WITH TALES OF YOUR GOOD FORTUNE.


I OWE IT TO SURYA.
BUT IT IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR DEVOTION.
NOW THAT YOU HAVE ENOUGH GOLD, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE THE GEM TO KING UGRASENA?
WHY SHOULD I?
BECAUSE HE IS THE KING. THE GEM WILL BE SAFE WITH HIM.
IT WILL BE EQUALLY SAFE WITH ME. I WILL NOT PART WITH IT.

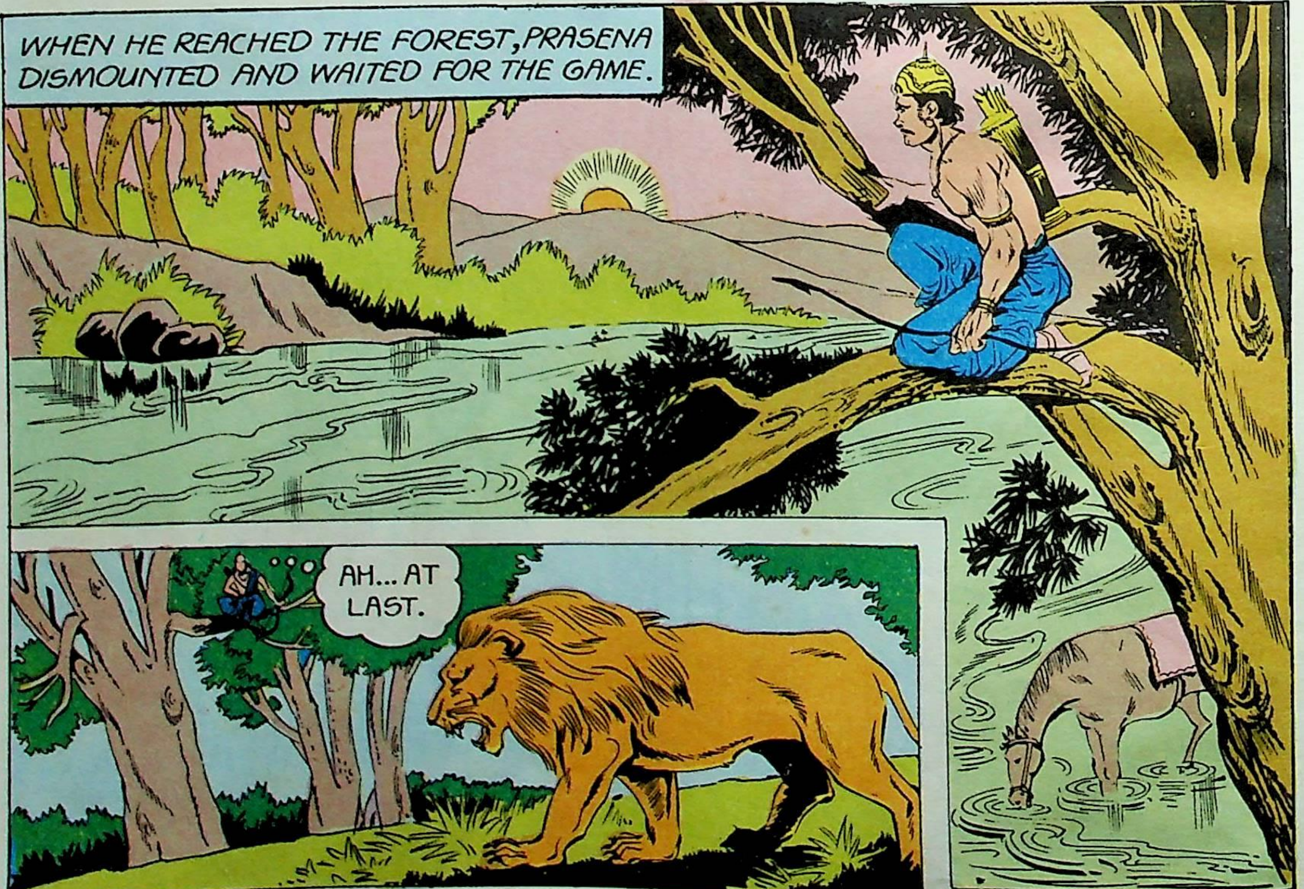


A FEW DAYS LATER, SATRAJIT'S BROTHER, PRASENA, WENT OUT ON A HUNT, WEARING THE JEWEL.

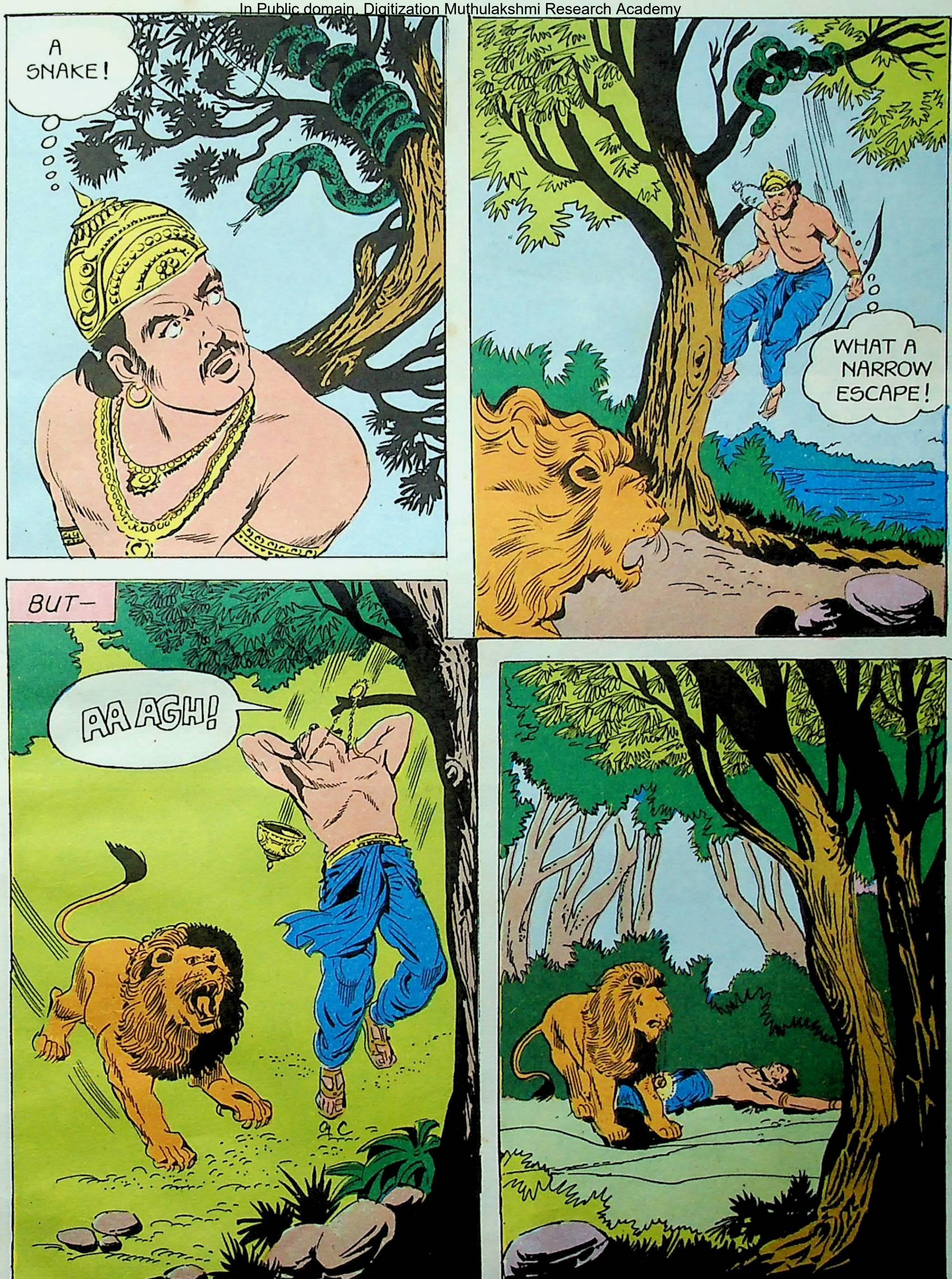
TAKE CARE, PRASENA.

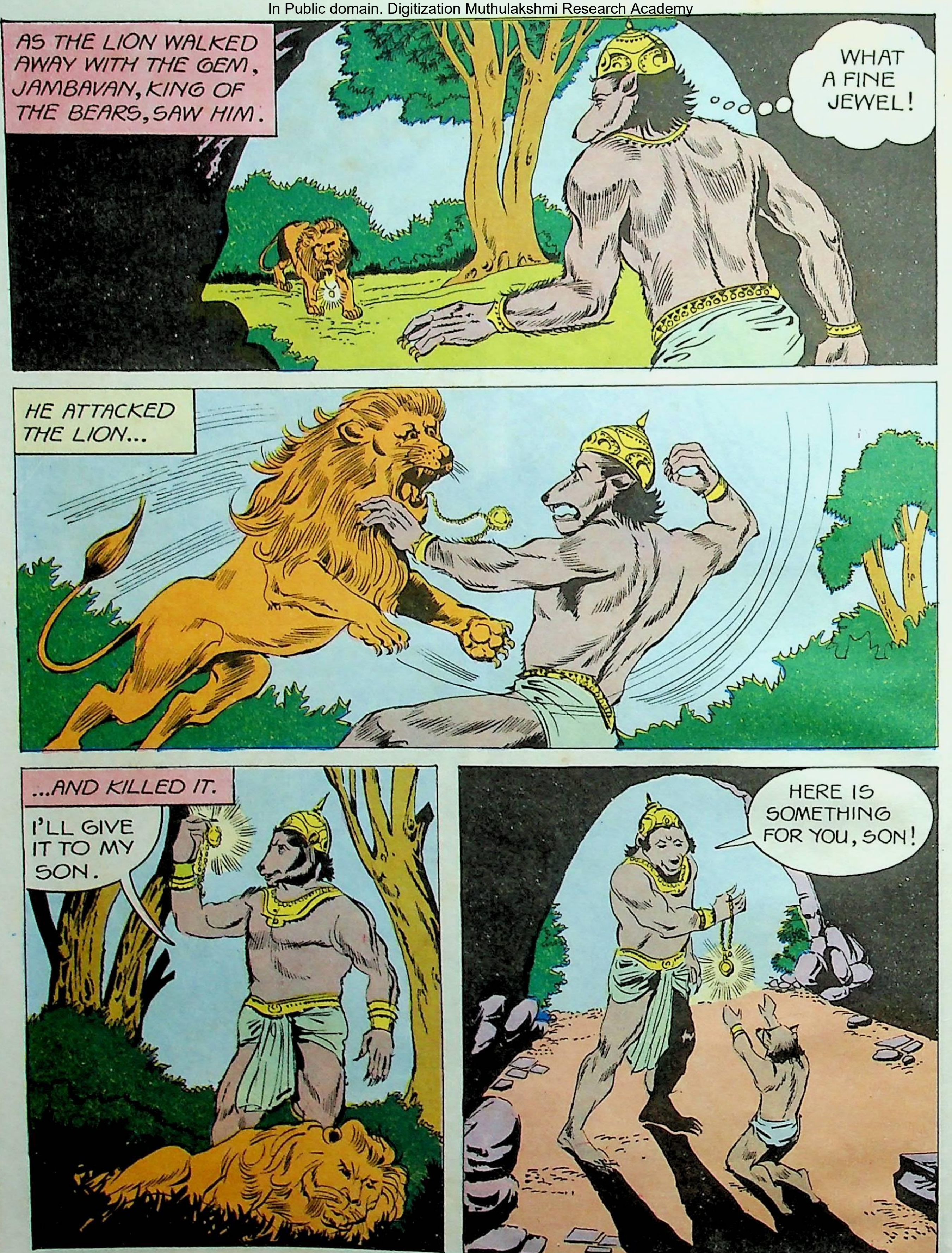


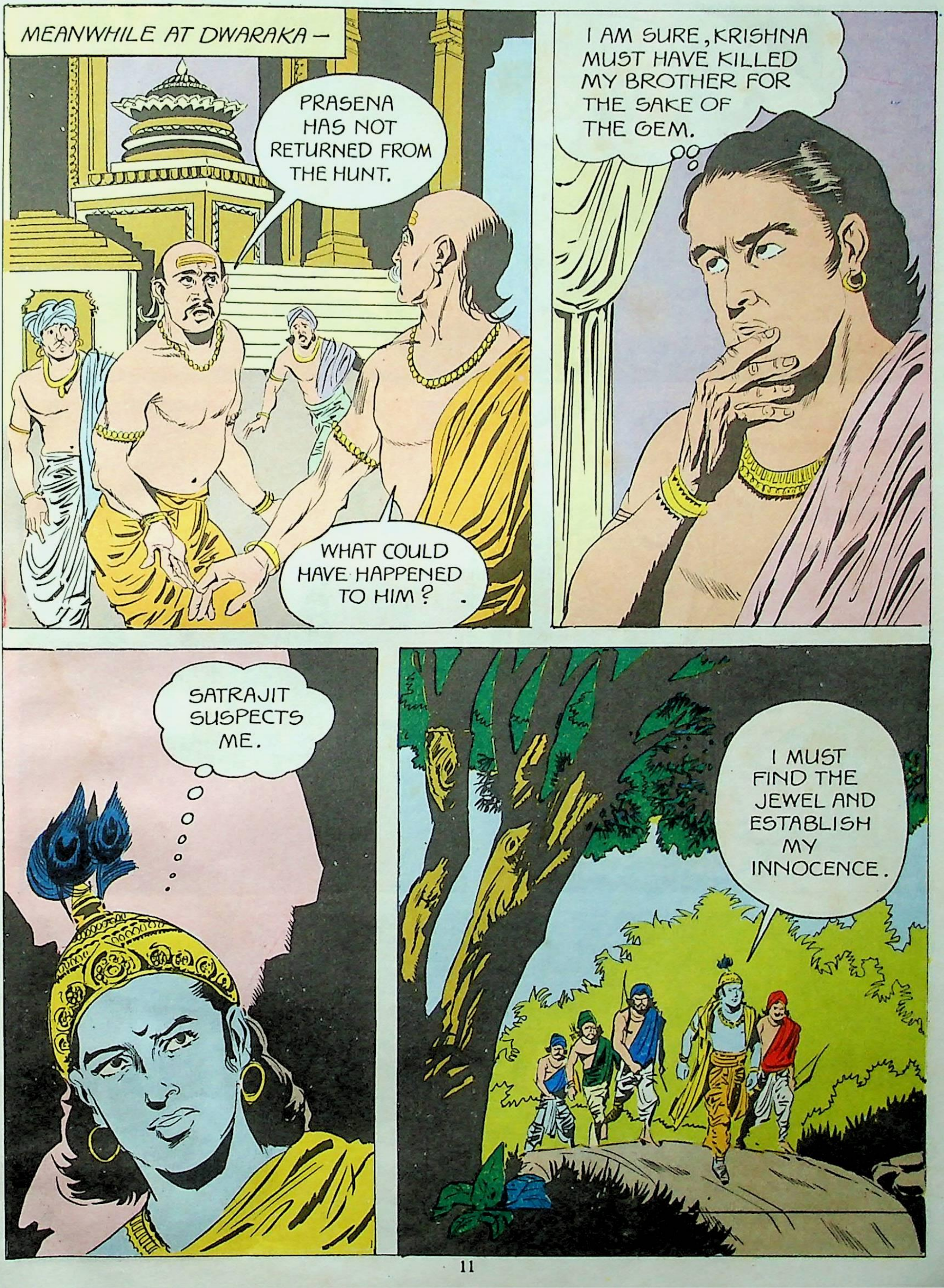
I MAY LOSE MY LIFE BUT I'LL GUARD THE JEWEL.

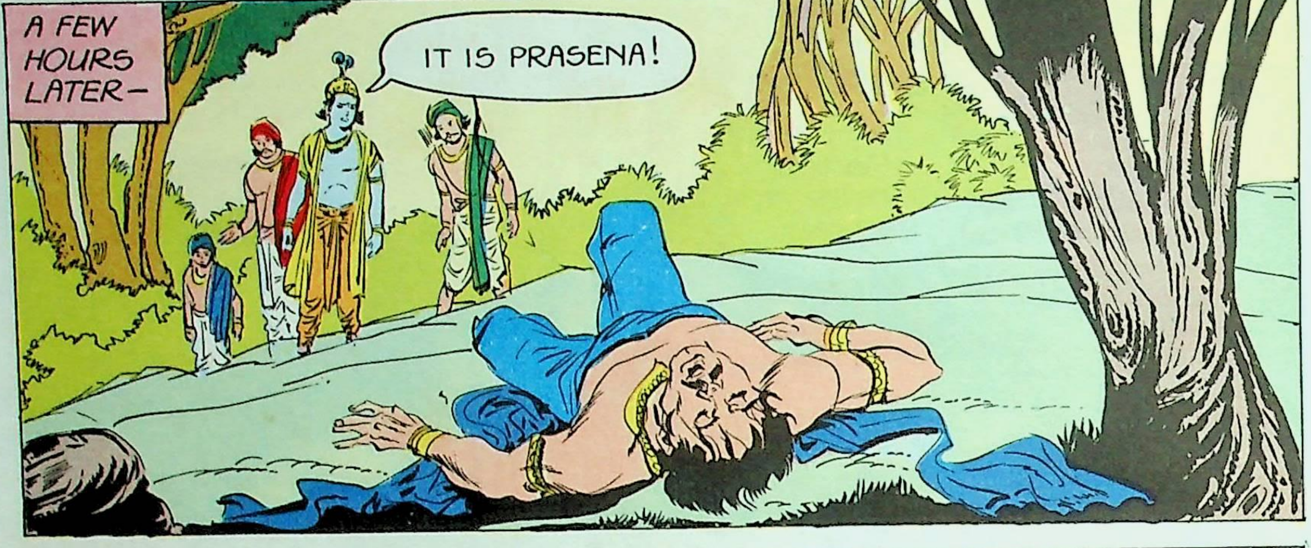


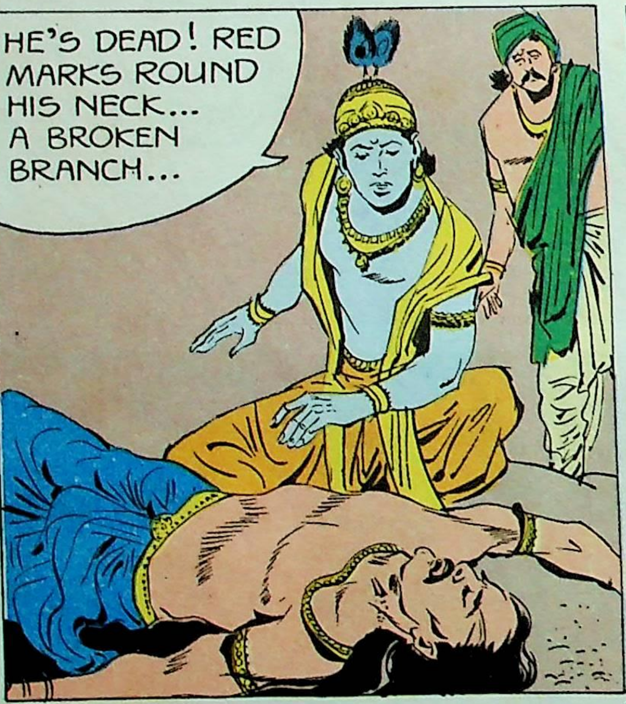
WHEN HE REACHED THE FOREST, PRASENA DISMOUNTED AND WAITED FOR THE GAME.

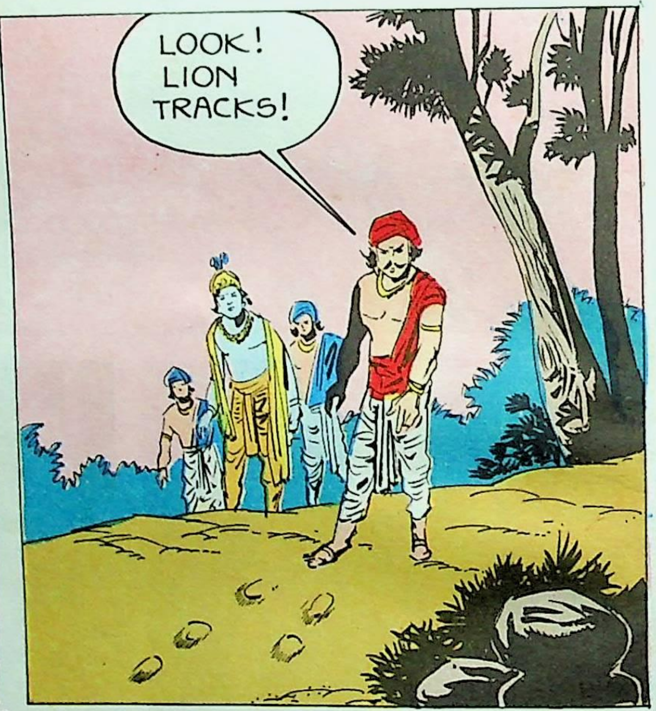

A SNAKE!
WHAT A NARROW ESCAPE!
BUT—
AA AGH!

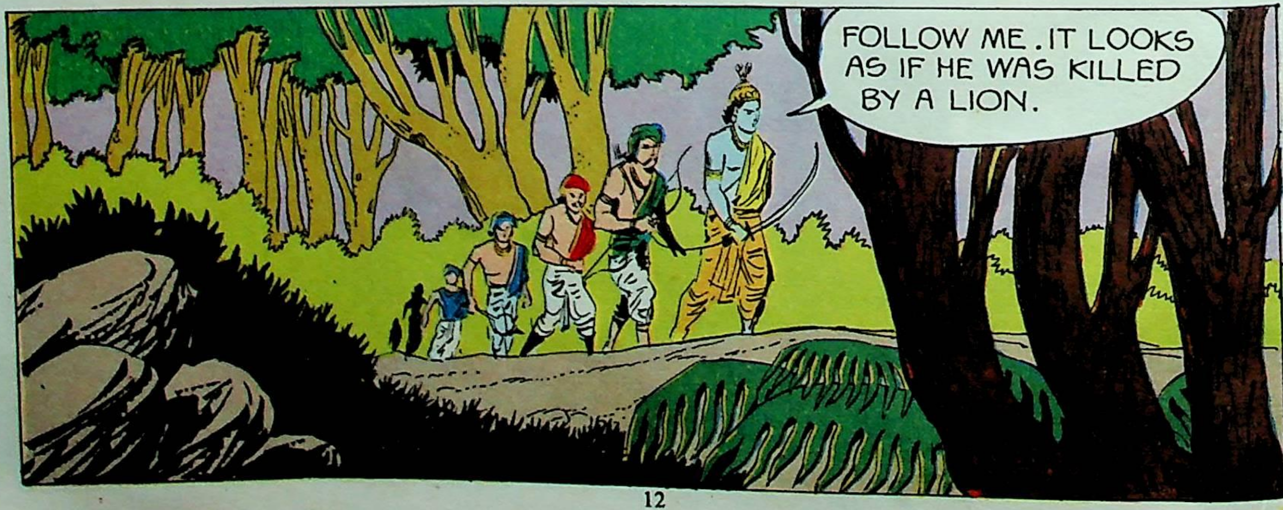

AS THE LION WALKED AWAY WITH THE GEM, JAMBAVAN, KING OF THE BEARS, SAW HIM.
WHAT A FINE JEWEL!
HE ATTACKED THE LION...
...AND KILLED IT.
I'LL GIVE IT TO MY SON.
HERE IS SOMETHING FOR YOU, SON!

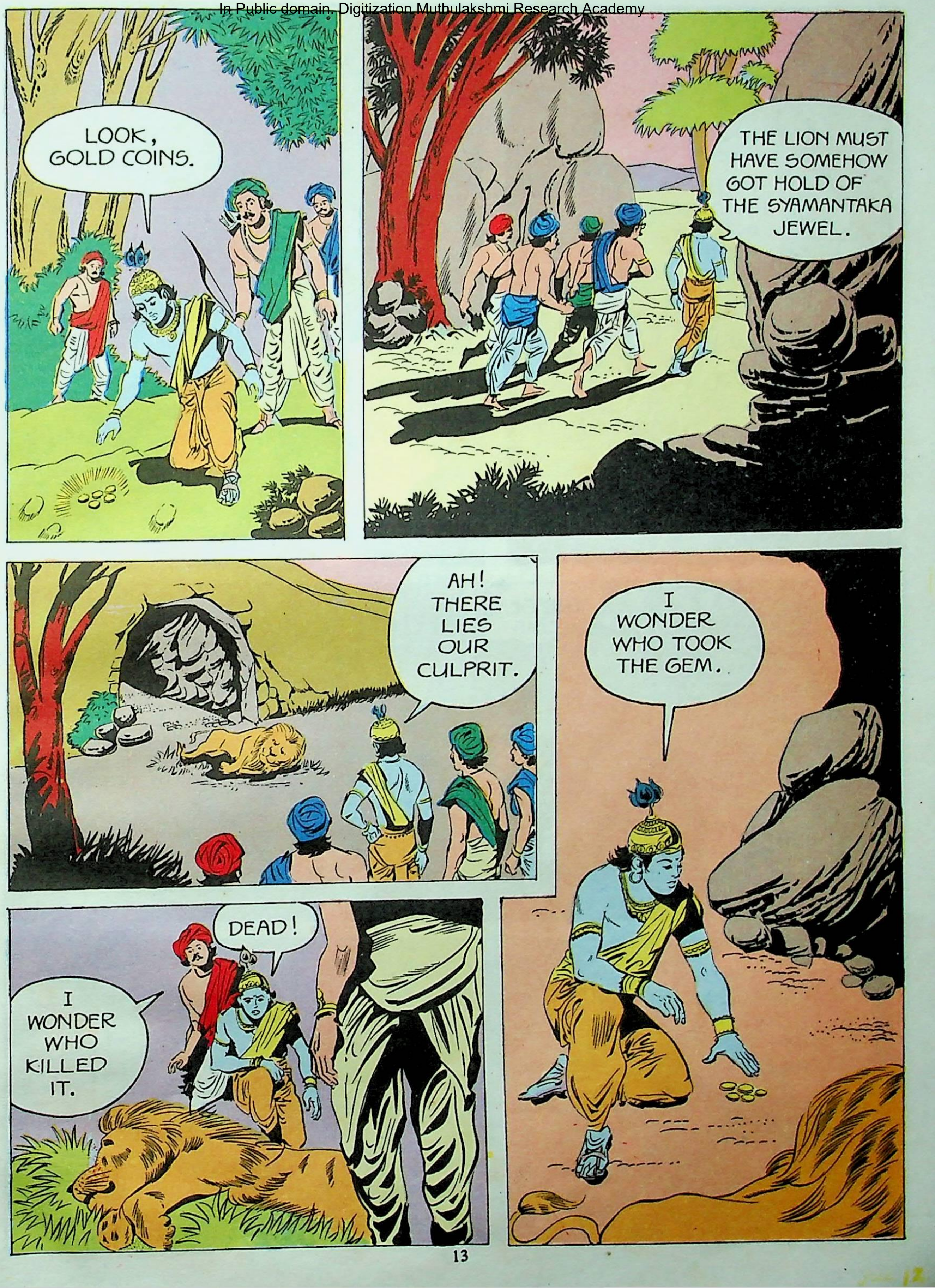

MEANWHILE AT DWARAKA —
PRASENA HAS NOT RETURNED FROM THE HUNT.
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM?
I AM SURE, KRISHNA MUST HAVE KILLED MY BROTHER FOR THE SAKE OF THE GEM.
SATRAJIT SUSPECTS ME.
I MUST FIND THE JEWEL AND ESTABLISH MY INNOCENCE.

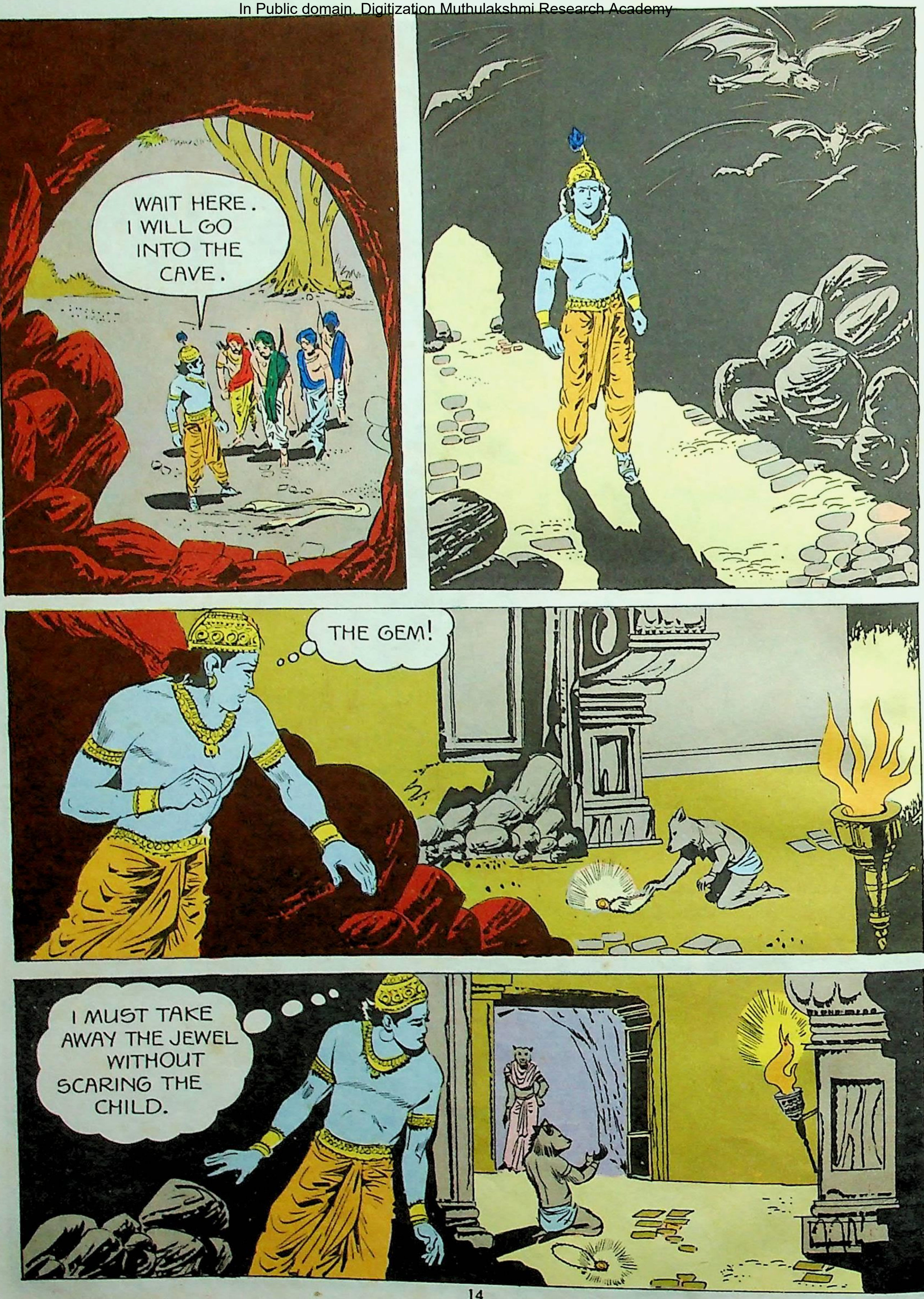

A FEW HOURS LATER—
IT IS PRASENA!

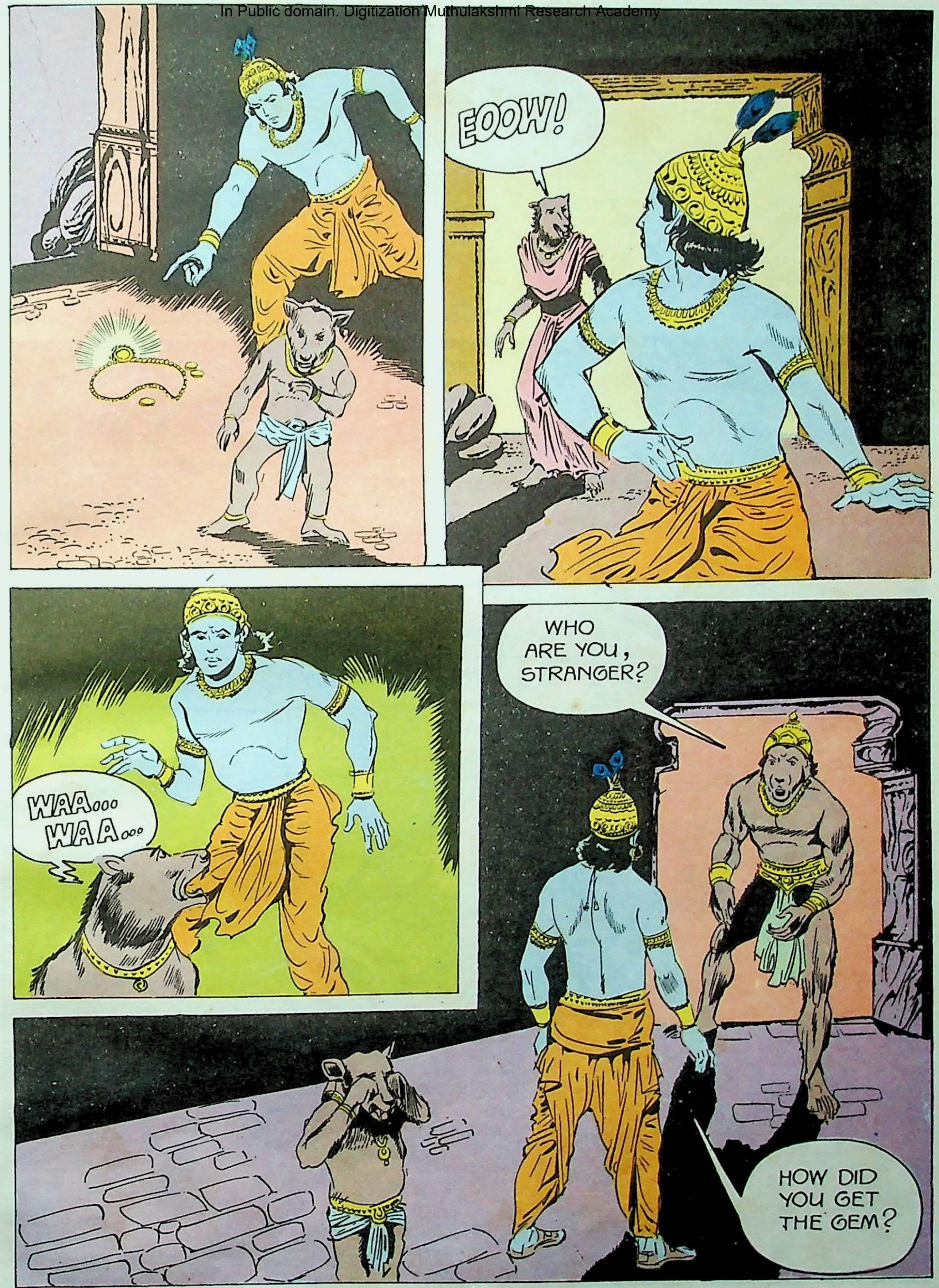

HE'S DEAD! RED MARKS ROUND HIS NECK... A BROKEN BRANCH...

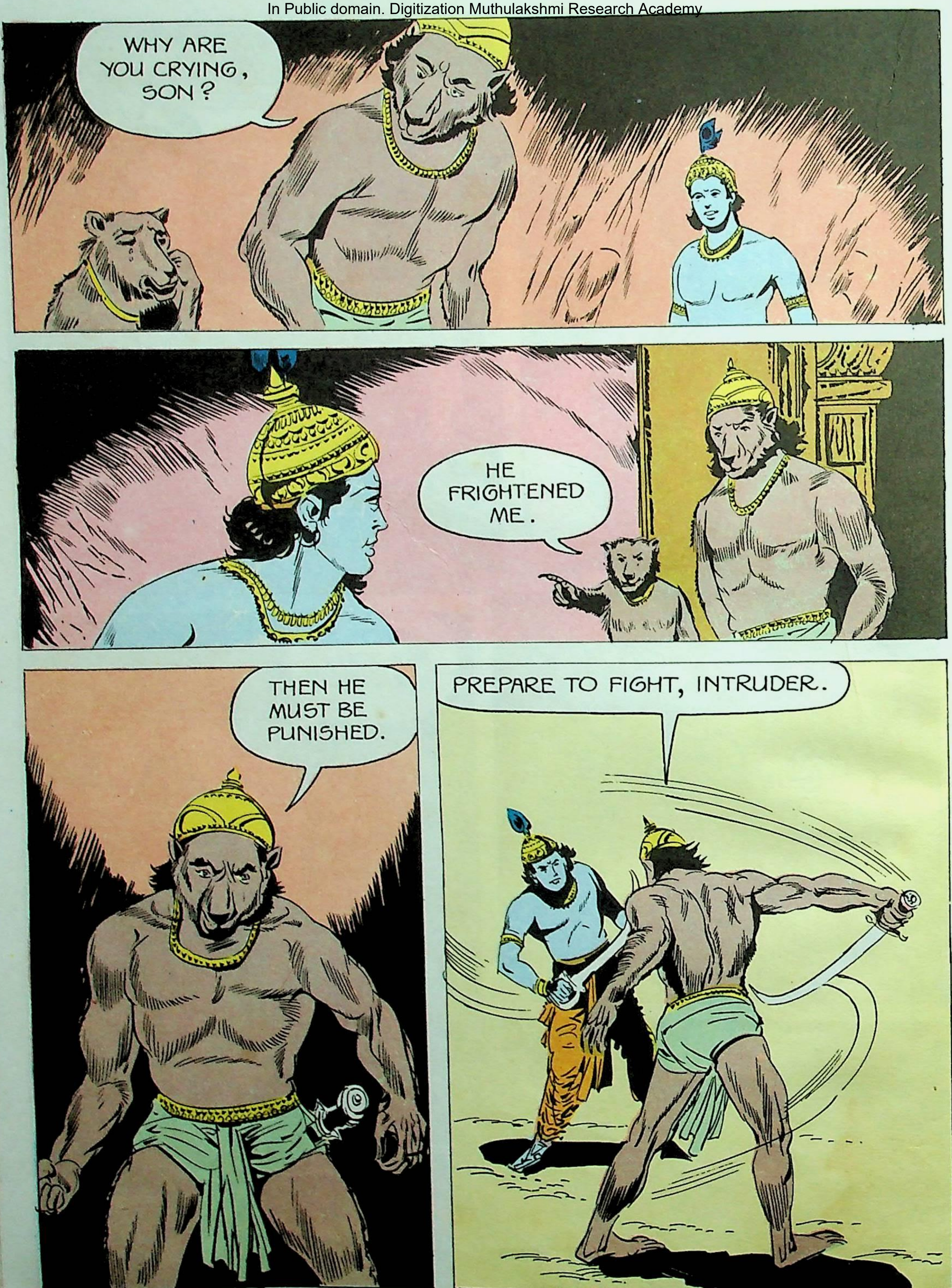

LOOK! LION TRACKS!

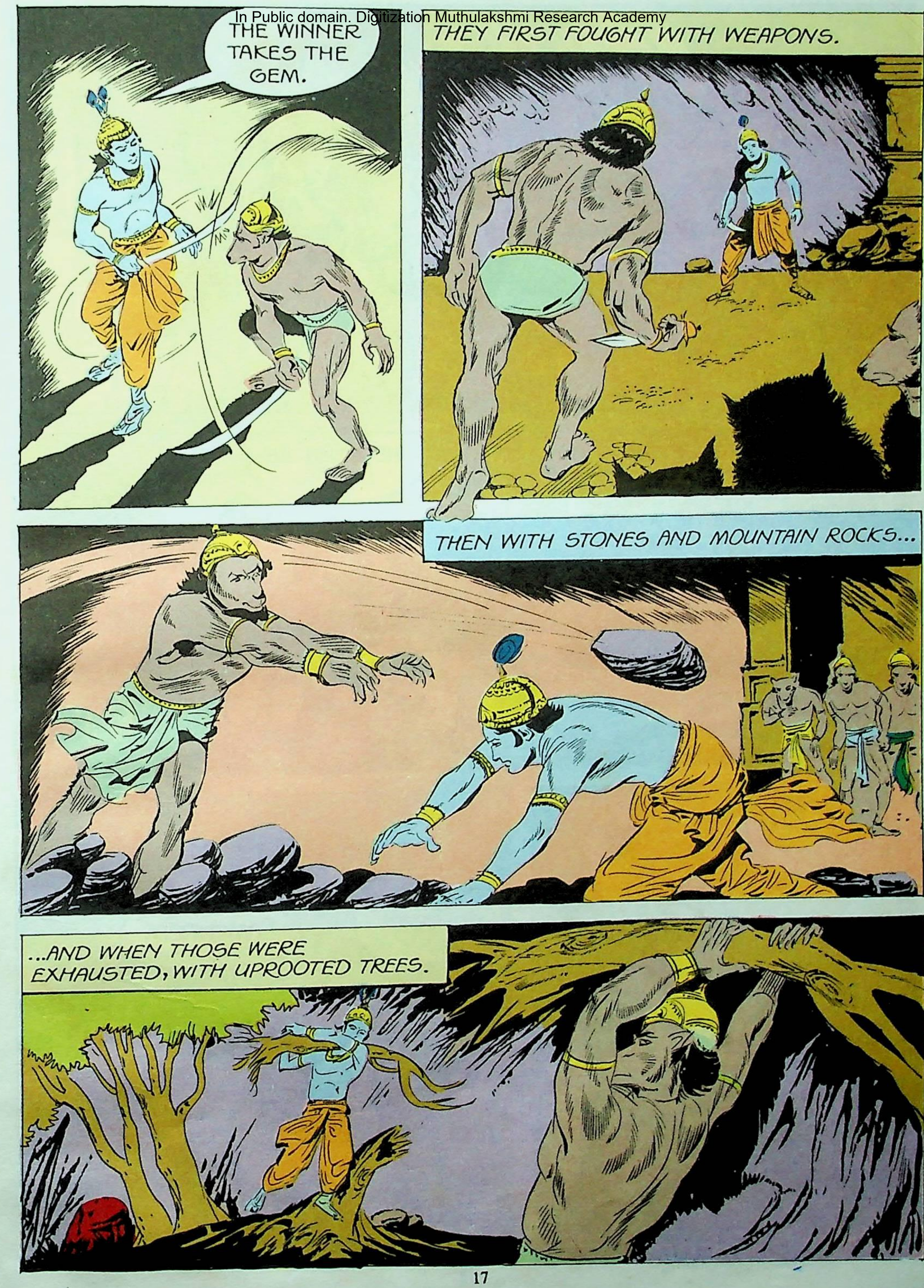

FOLLOW ME. IT LOOKS AS IF HE WAS KILLED BY A LION.

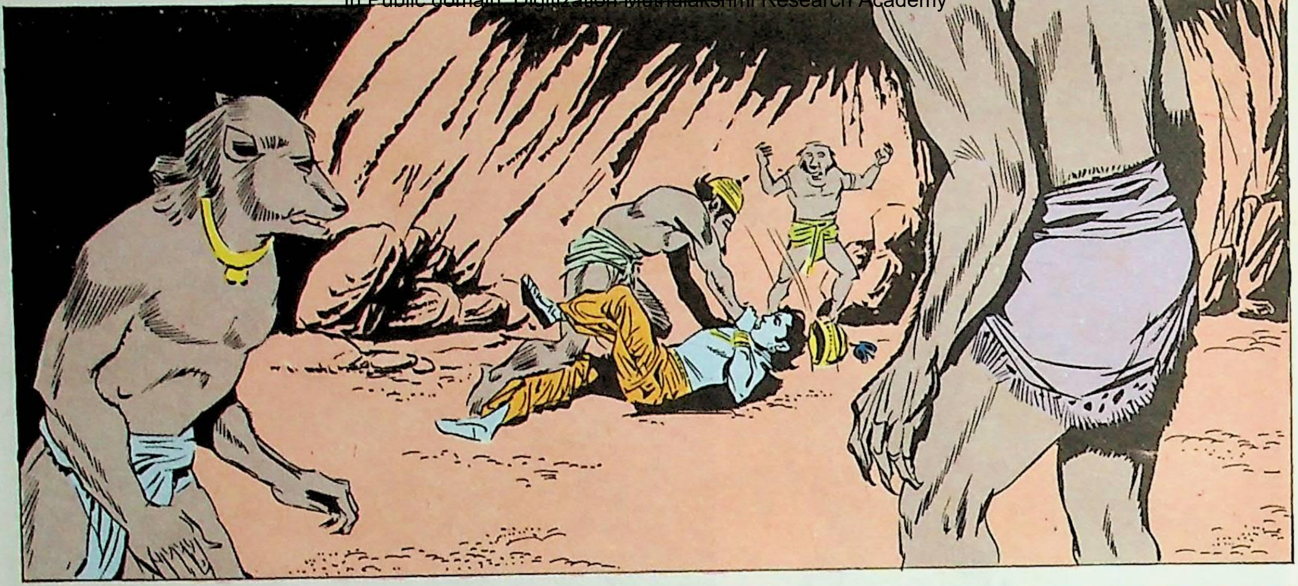

LOOK, GOLD COINS.
THE LION MUST HAVE SOMEHOW GOT HOLD OF THE SYAMANTAKA JEWEL.
AH! THERE LIES OUR CULPRIT.
DEAD!
I WONDER WHO KILLED IT.
I WONDER WHO TOOK THE GEM.

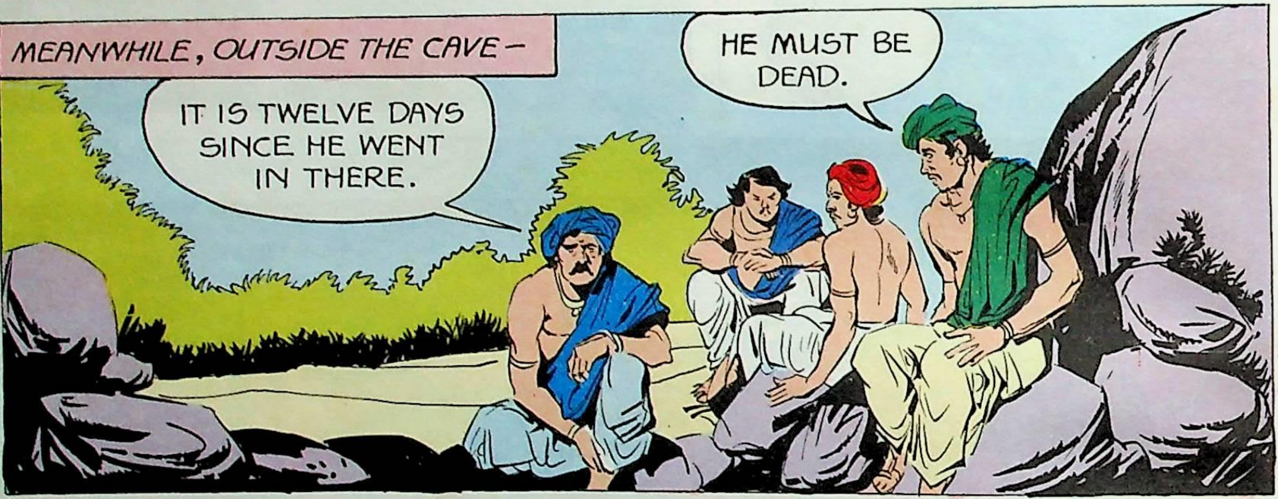

WAIT HERE. I WILL GO INTO THE CAVE.
THE GEM!
I MUST TAKE AWAY THE JEWEL WITHOUT SCARING THE CHILD.

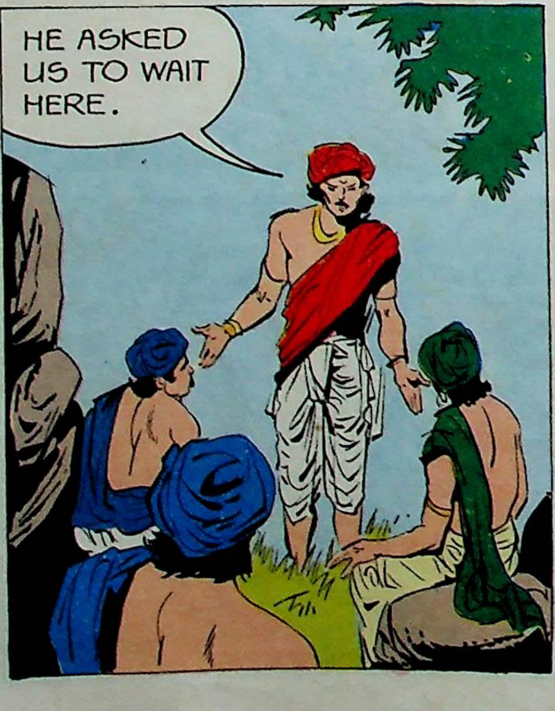

EOOW!
WAA... WA A...
WHO ARE YOU, STRANGER?
HOW DID YOU GET THE GEM?

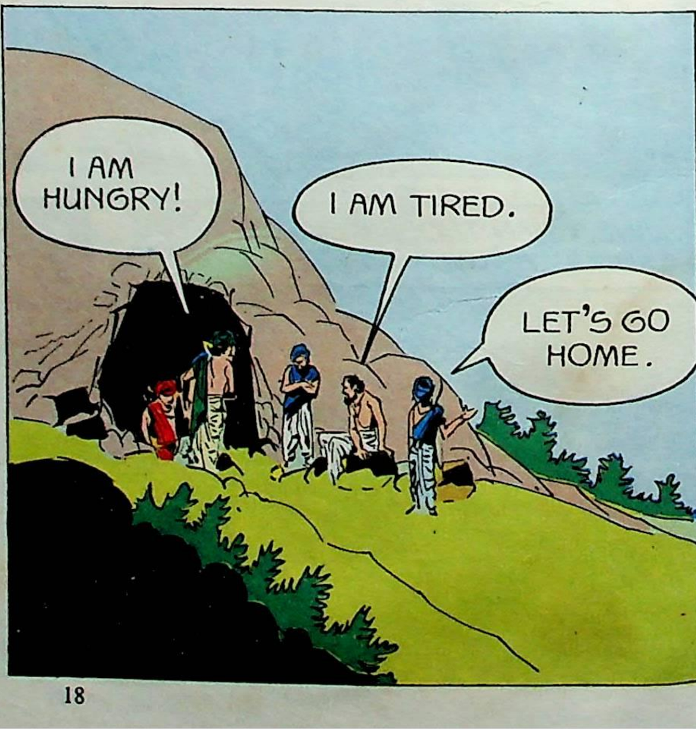

WHY ARE YOU CRYING, SON ?
HE FRIGHTENED ME.
THEN HE MUST BE PUNISHED.
PREPARE TO FIGHT, INTRUDER.

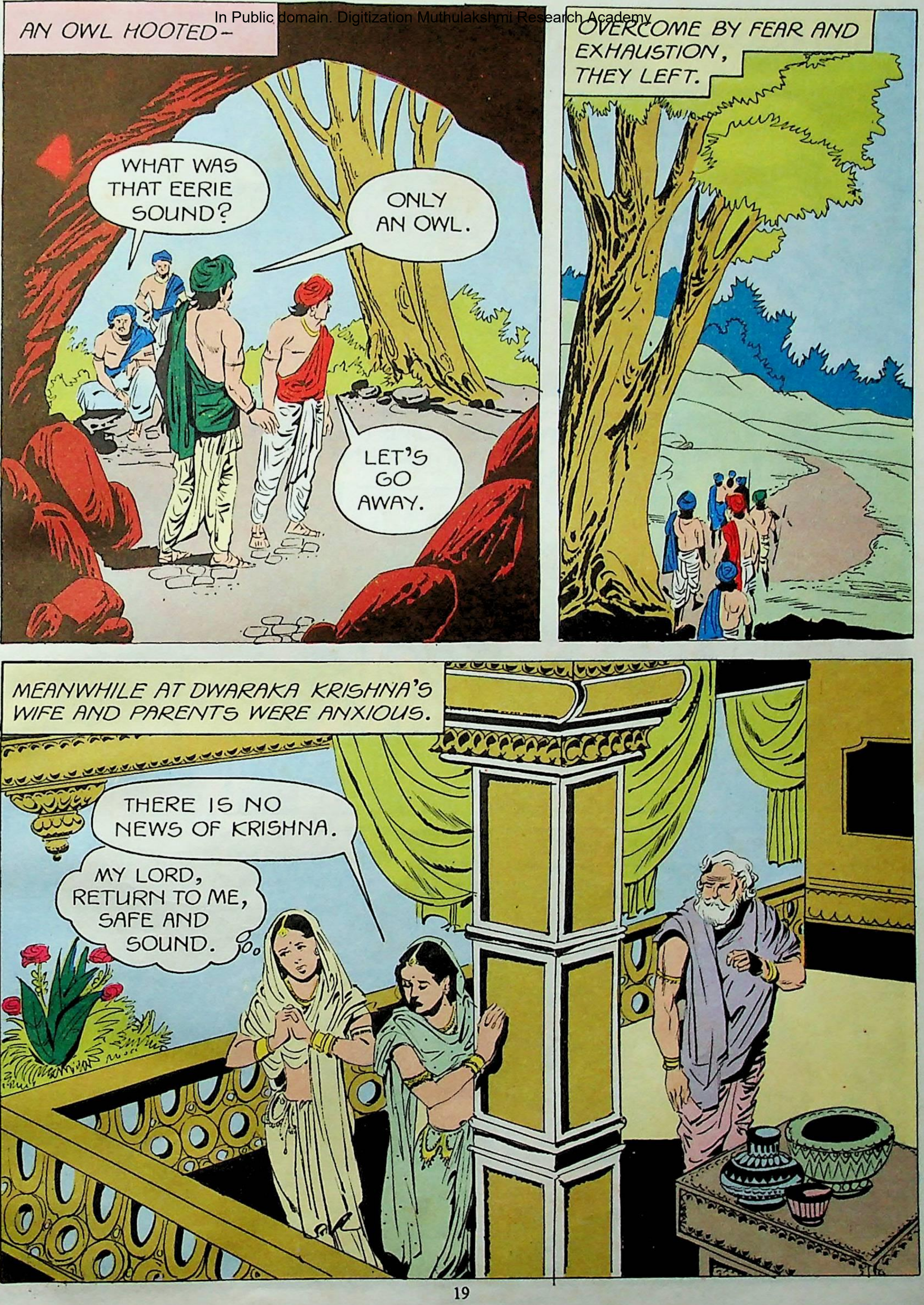

THE WINNER TAKES THE GEM.
THEY FIRST FOUGHT WITH WEAPONS.
THEN WITH STONES AND MOUNTAIN ROCKS...
...AND WHEN THOSE WERE EXHAUSTED, WITH UPROOTED TREES.

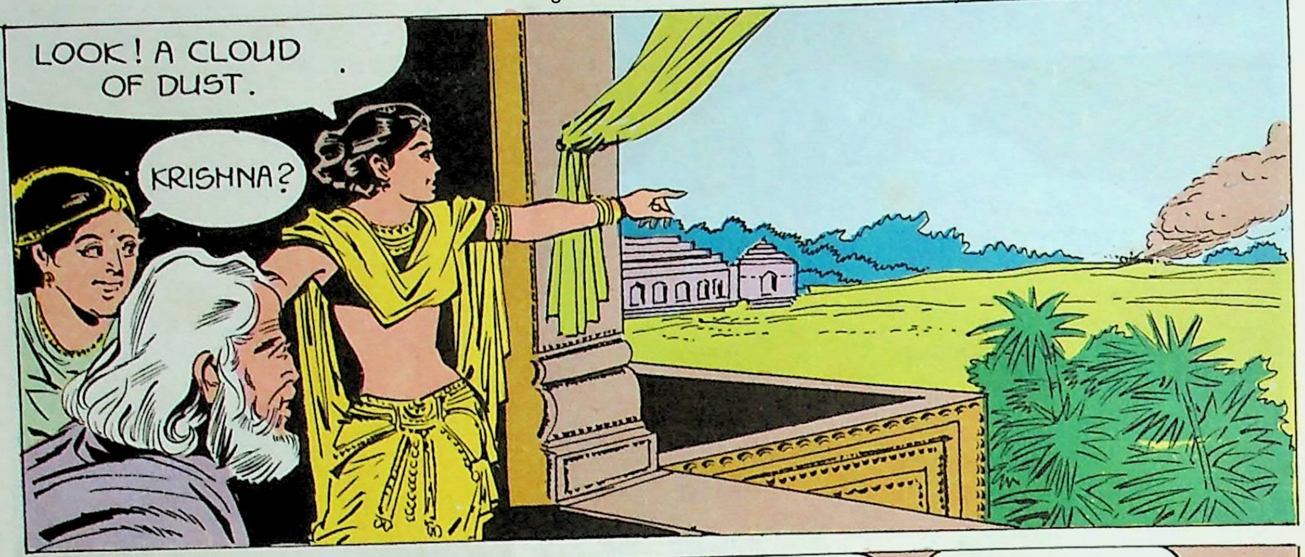


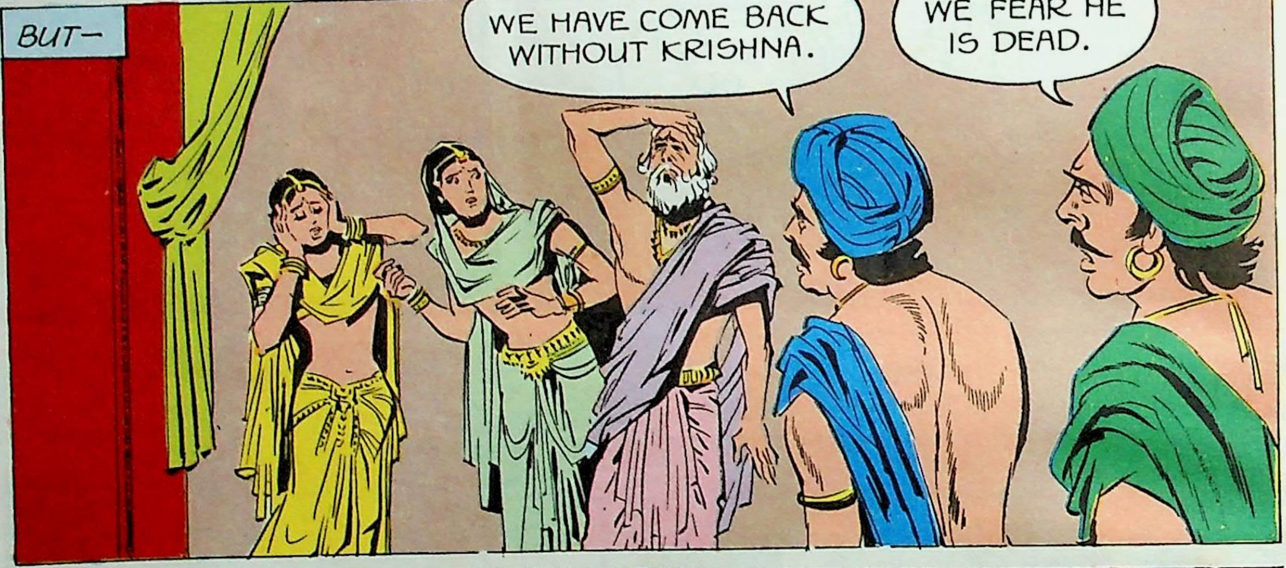

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE CAVE—
IT IS TWELVE DAYS SINCE HE WENT IN THERE.
HE MUST BE DEAD.


HE ASKED US TO WAIT HERE.

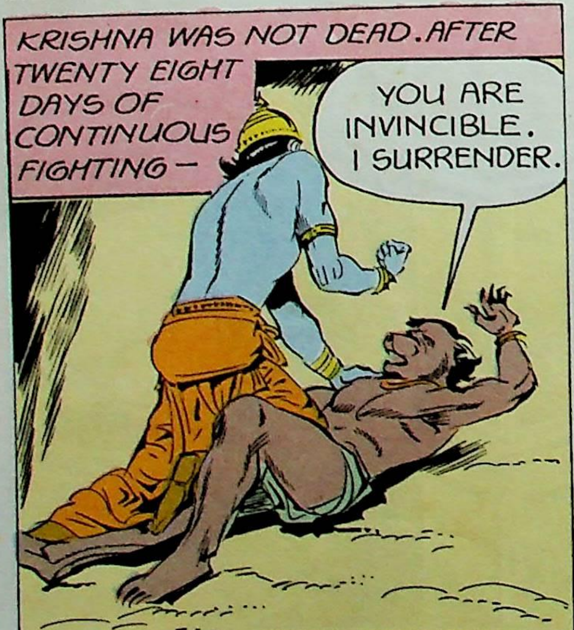

I AM HUNGRY!
I AM TIRED.
LET'S GO HOME.


AN OWL HOOTED–
WHAT WAS THAT EERIE SOUND?
ONLY AN OWL.
LET'S GO AWAY.
OVERCOME BY FEAR AND EXHAUSTION, THEY LEFT.
MEANWHILE AT DWARAKA KRISHNA'S WIFE AND PARENTS WERE ANXIOUS.
THERE IS NO NEWS OF KRISHNA.
MY LORD, RETURN TO ME, SAFE AND SOUND.

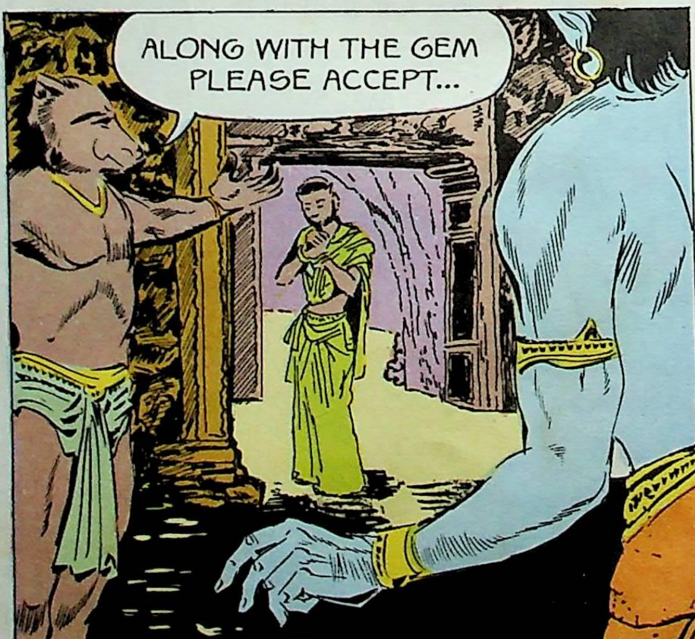

LOOK! A CLOUD OF DUST.
KRISHNA?

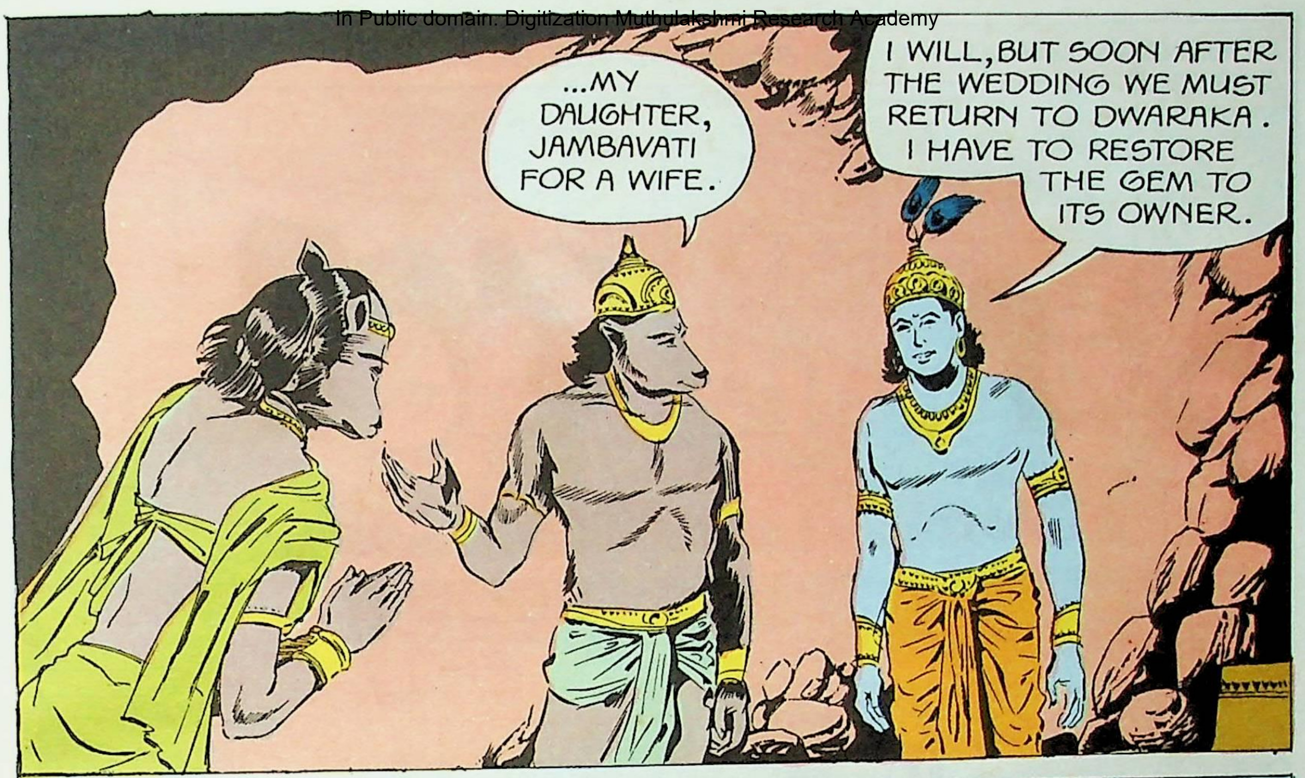

BUT—

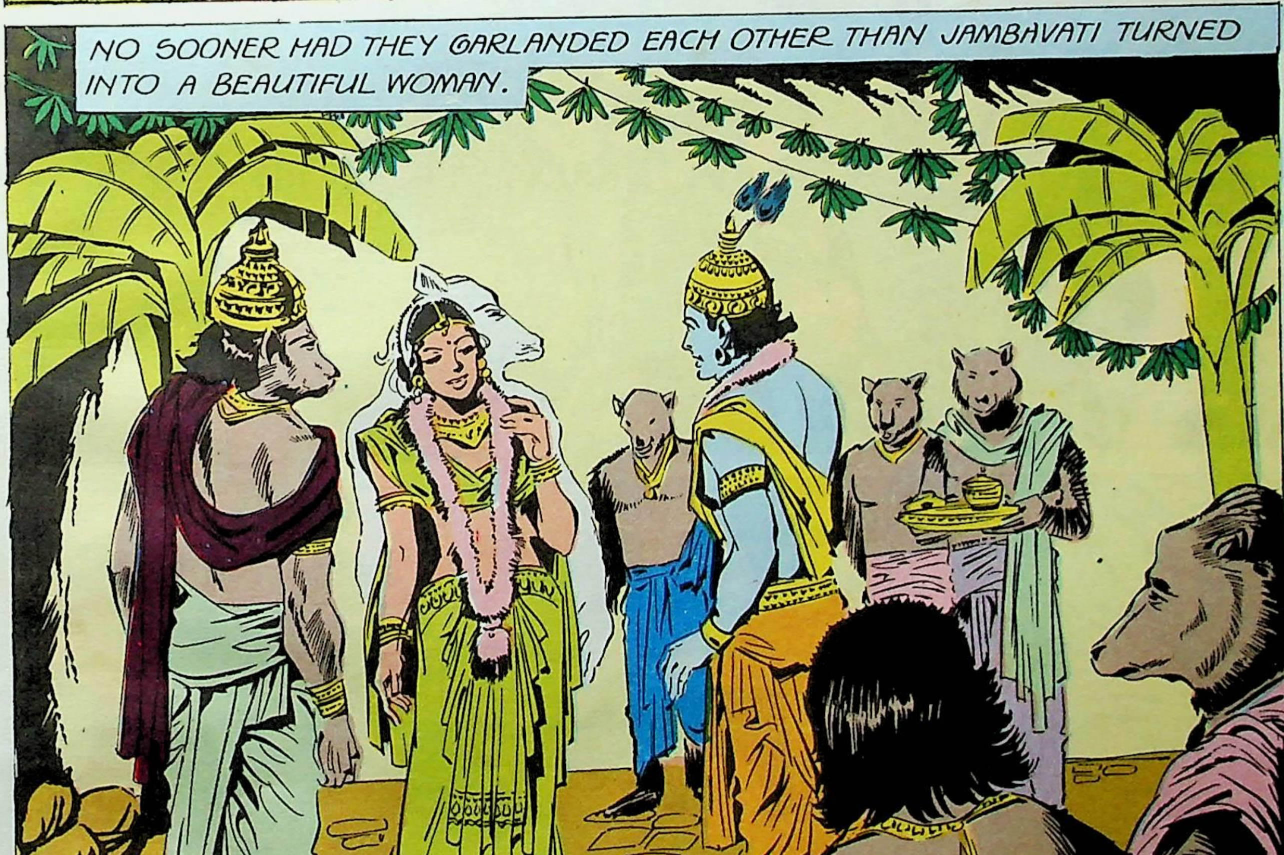
WE HAVE COME BACK WITHOUT KRISHNA.
WE FEAR HE IS DEAD.

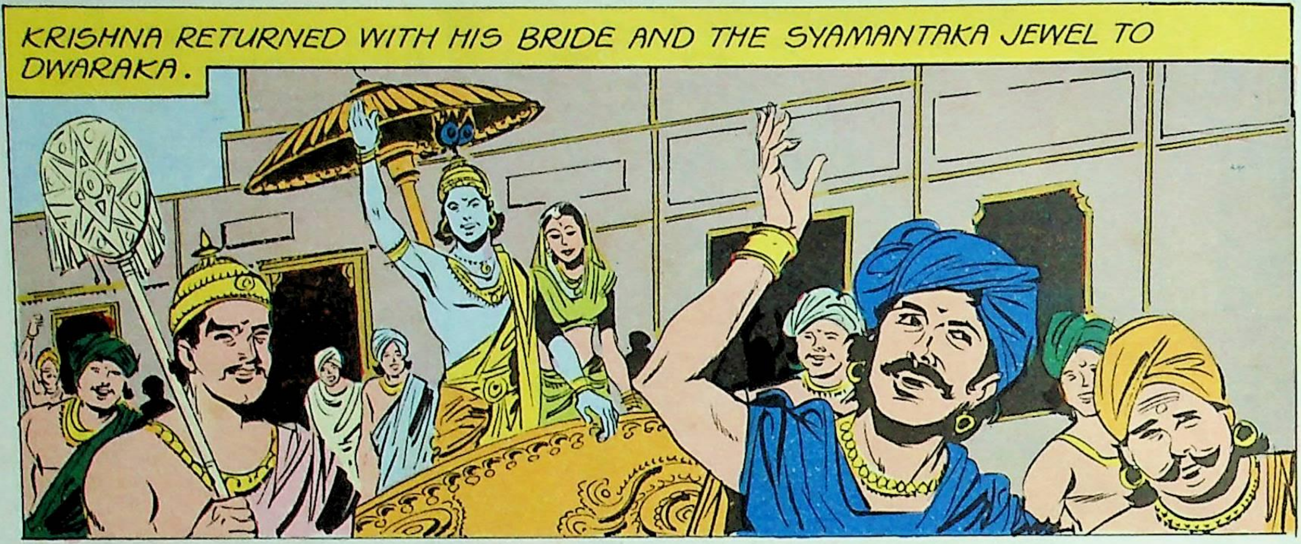

KRISHNA WAS NOT DEAD. AFTER TWENTY EIGHT DAYS OF CONTINUOUS FIGHTING—

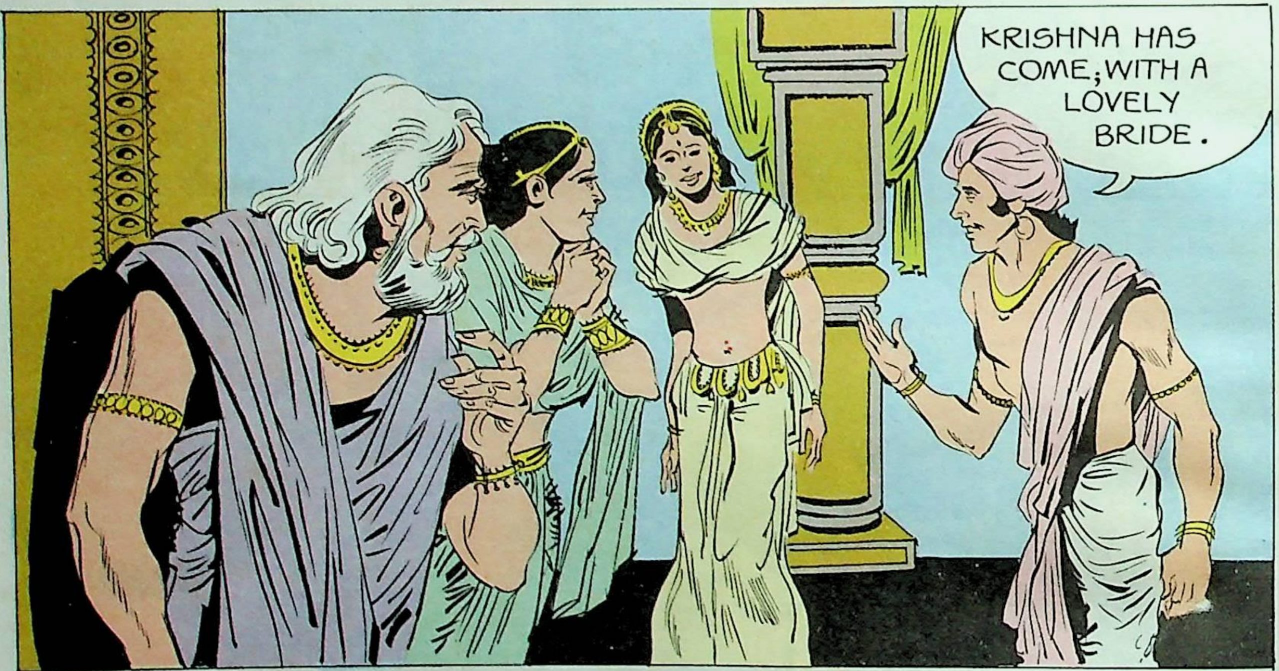
YOU ARE INVINCIBLE. I SURRENDER.

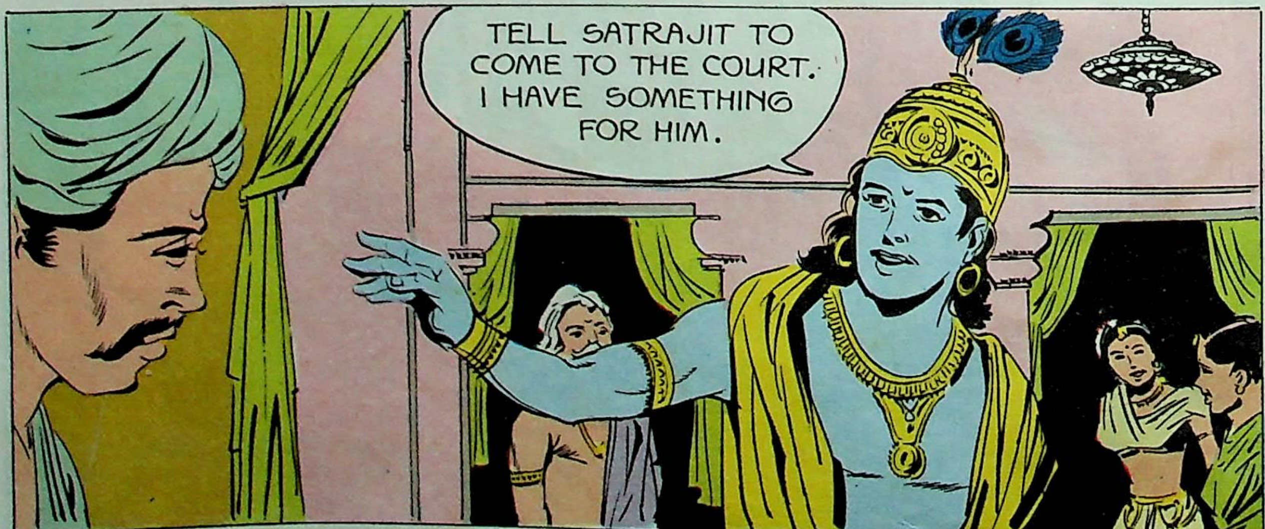

ALONG WITH THE GEM PLEASE ACCEPT...

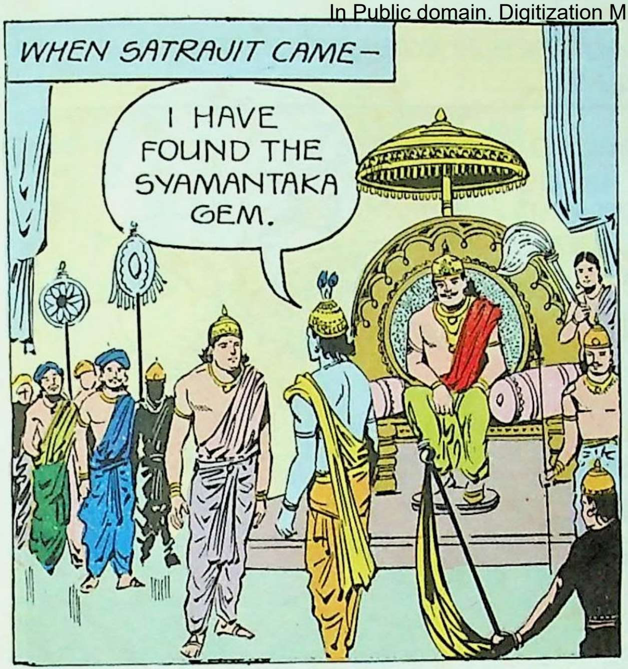

...MY DAUGHTER, JAMBAVATI FOR A WIFE.
I WILL, BUT SOON AFTER THE WEDDING WE MUST RETURN TO DWARAKA. I HAVE TO RESTORE THE GEM TO ITS OWNER.

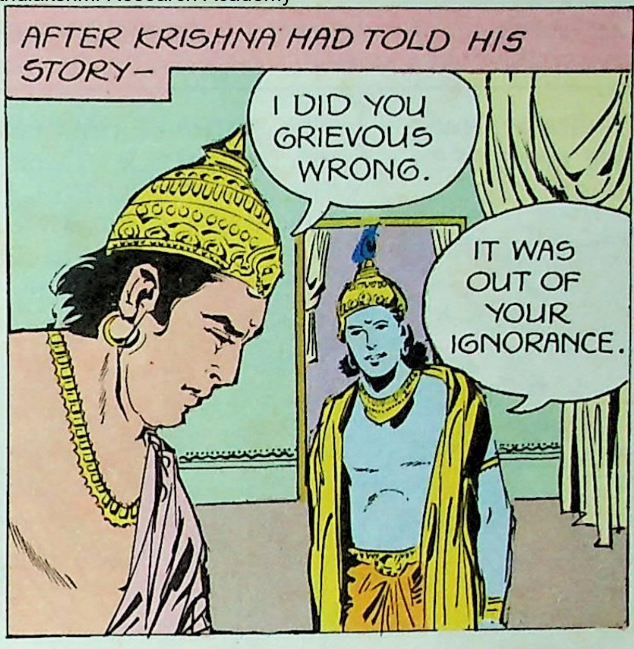

NO SOONER HAD THEY GARLANDED EACH OTHER THAN JAMBAVATI TURNED INTO A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

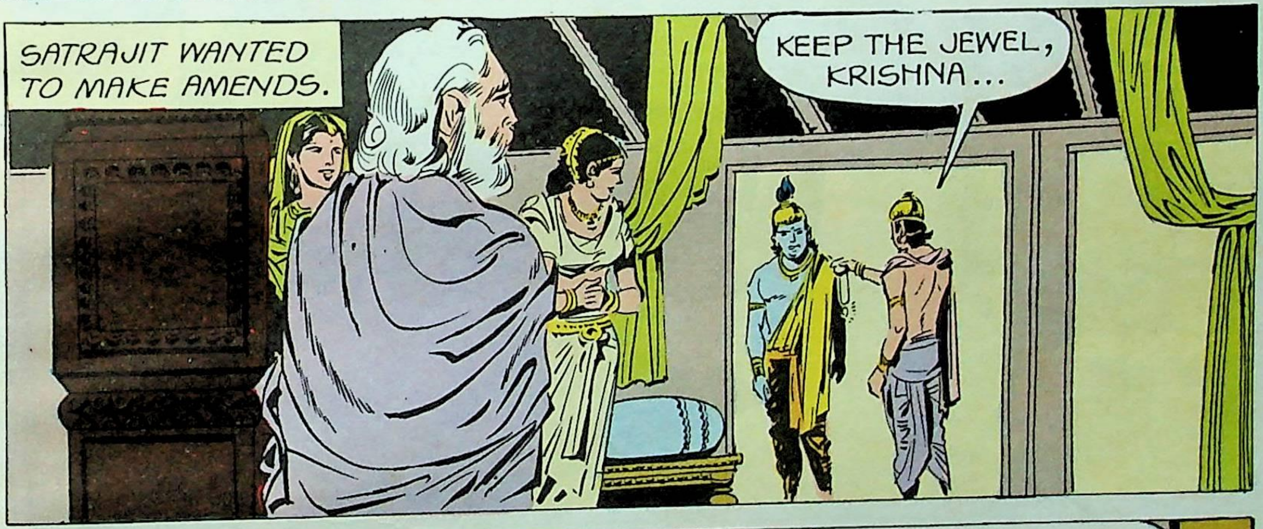

KRISHNA RETURNED WITH HIS BRIDE AND THE SYAMANTAKA JEWEL TO DWARAKA.

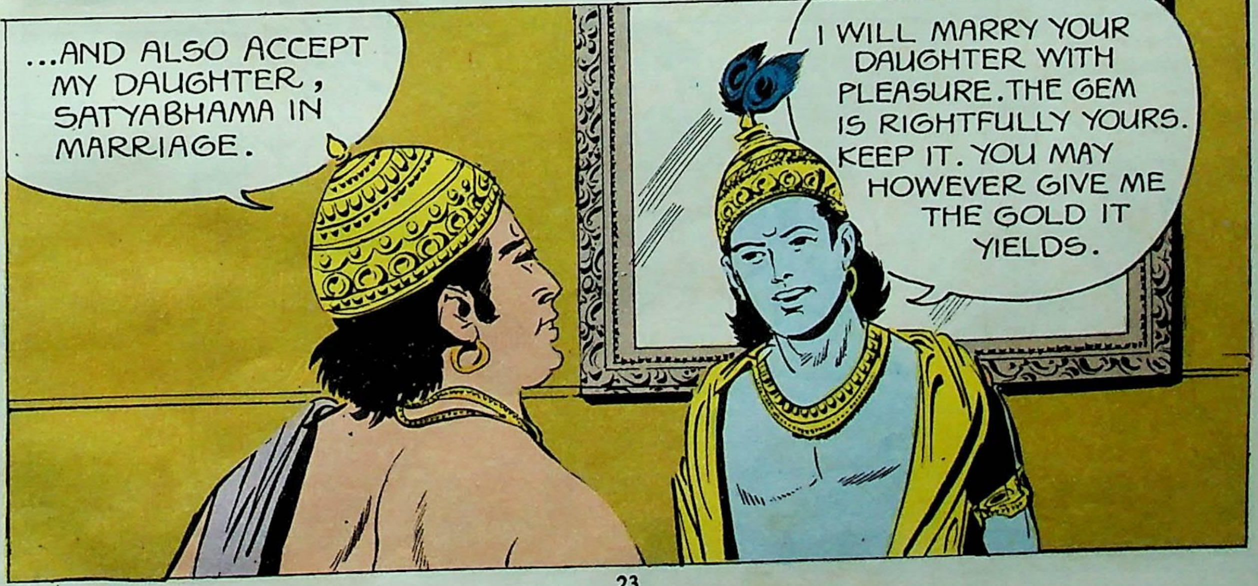

KRISHNA HAS COME; WITH A LOVELY BRIDE.


TELL SATRAJIT TO COME TO THE COURT. I HAVE SOMETHING FOR HIM.

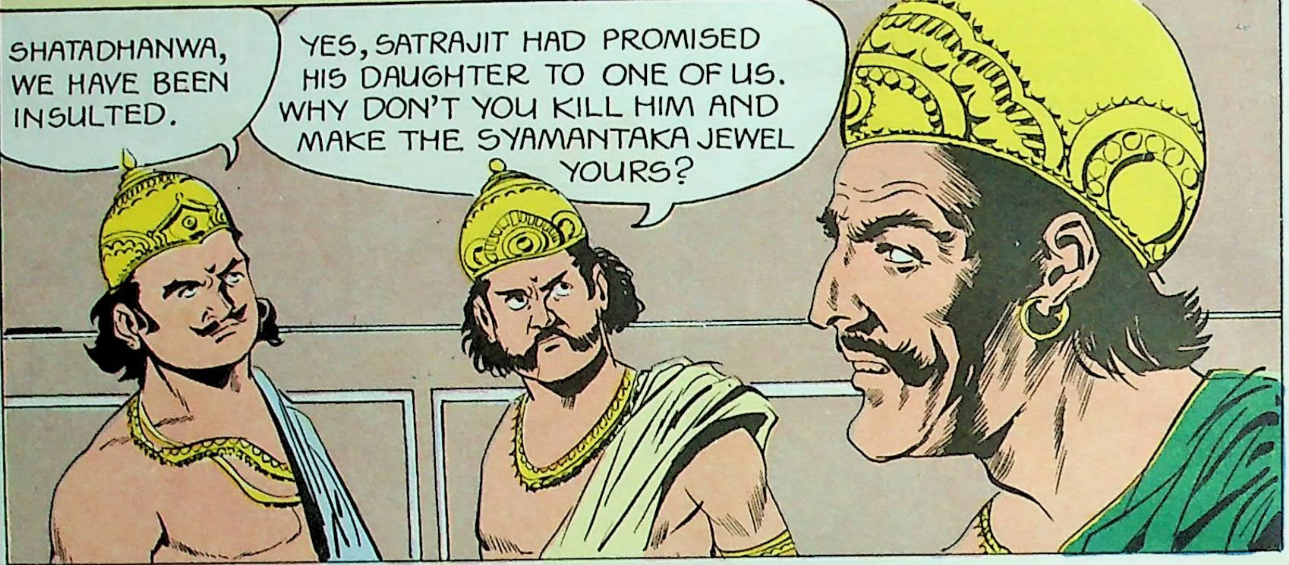

WHEN SATRAJIT CAME–
I HAVE FOUND THE SYAMANTAKA GEM.


AFTER KRISHNA HAD TOLD HIS STORY–
I DID YOU GRIEVOUS WRONG.
IT WAS OUT OF YOUR IGNORANCE.

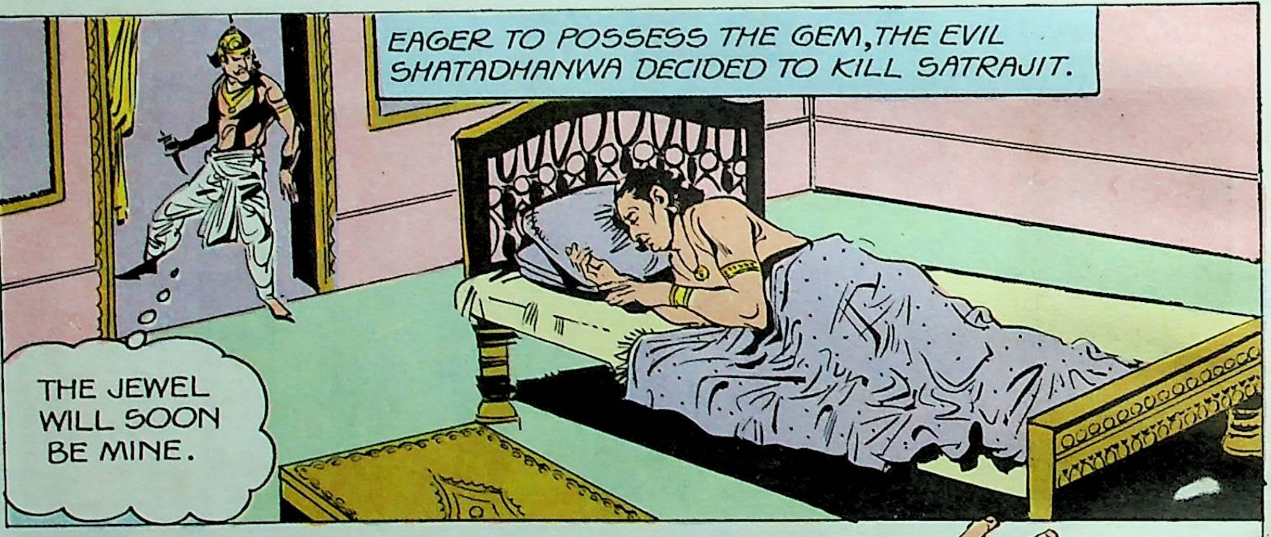

SATRAJIT WANTED TO MAKE AMENDS.
KEEP THE JEWEL, KRISHNA...

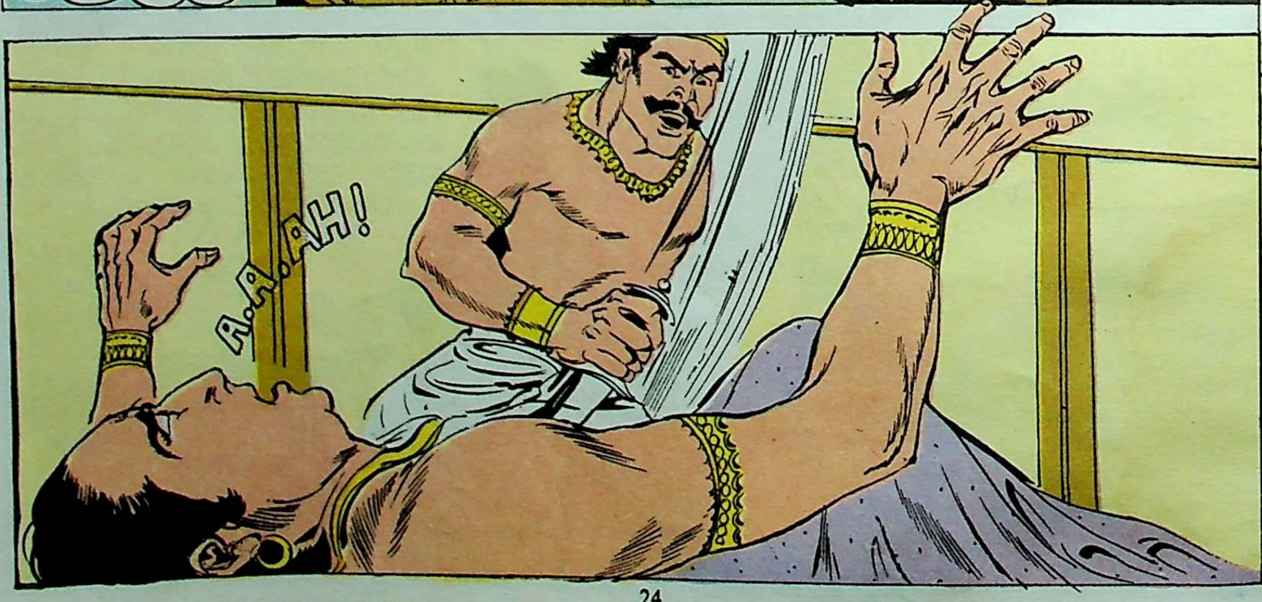

...AND ALSO ACCEPT MY DAUGHTER, SATYABHAMA IN MARRIAGE.
I WILL MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER WITH PLEASURE. THE GEM IS RIGHTFULLY YOURS. KEEP IT. YOU MAY HOWEVER GIVE ME THE GOLD IT YIELDS.

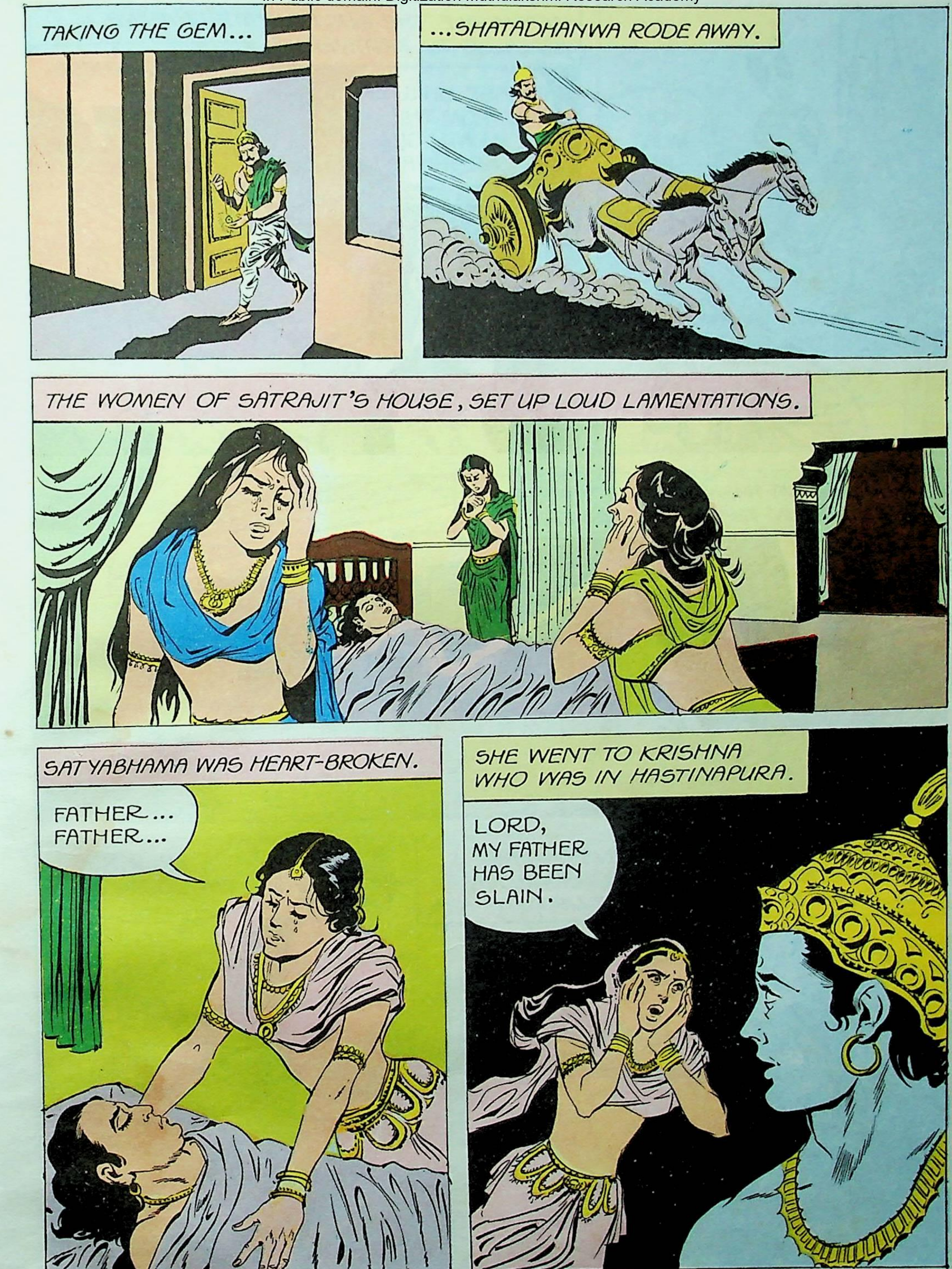
MEANWHILE, SATYABHAMA'S DISAPPOINTED SUITORS, AKRURA, KRITAVARMA AND SHATADHANWA, NURSED THOUGHTS OF REVENGE.

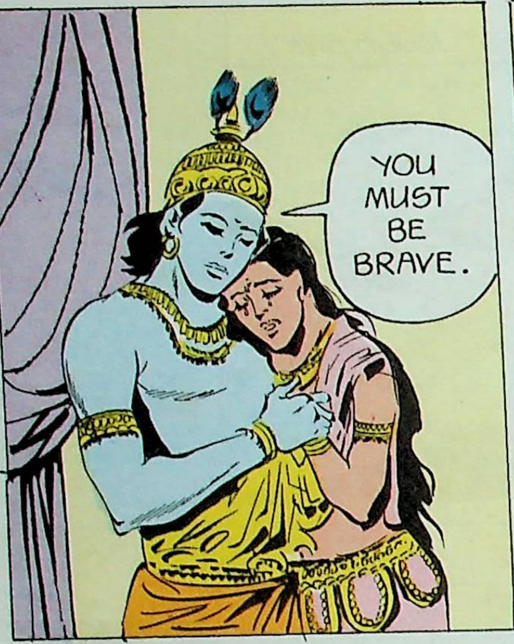

SHATADHANWA, WE HAVE BEEN INSULTED.
YES, SATRAJIT HAD PROMISED HIS DAUGHTER TO ONE OF US. WHY DON'T YOU KILL HIM AND MAKE THE SYAMANTAKA JEWEL YOURS?

EAGER TO POSSESS THE GEM, THE EVIL SHATADHANWA DECIDED TO KILL SATRAJIT.

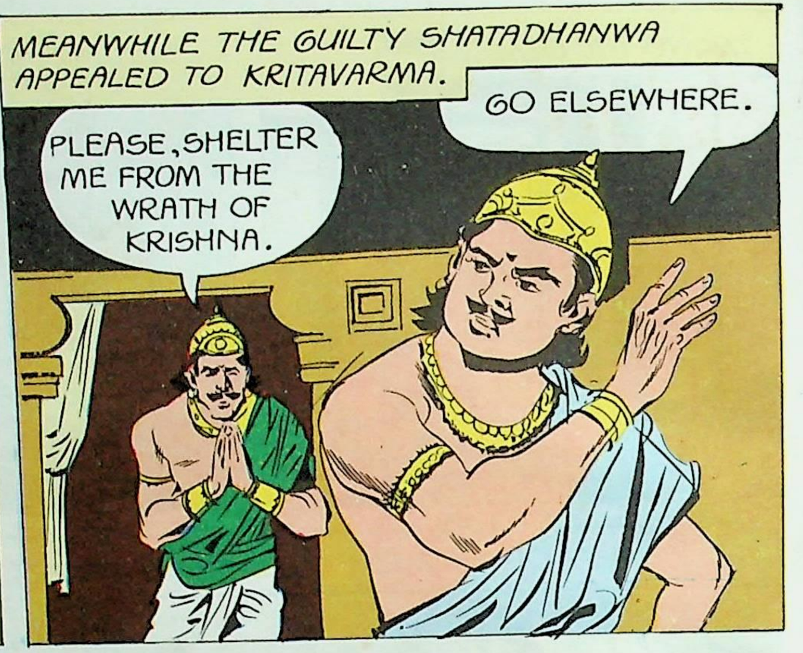

THE JEWEL WILL SOON BE MINE.



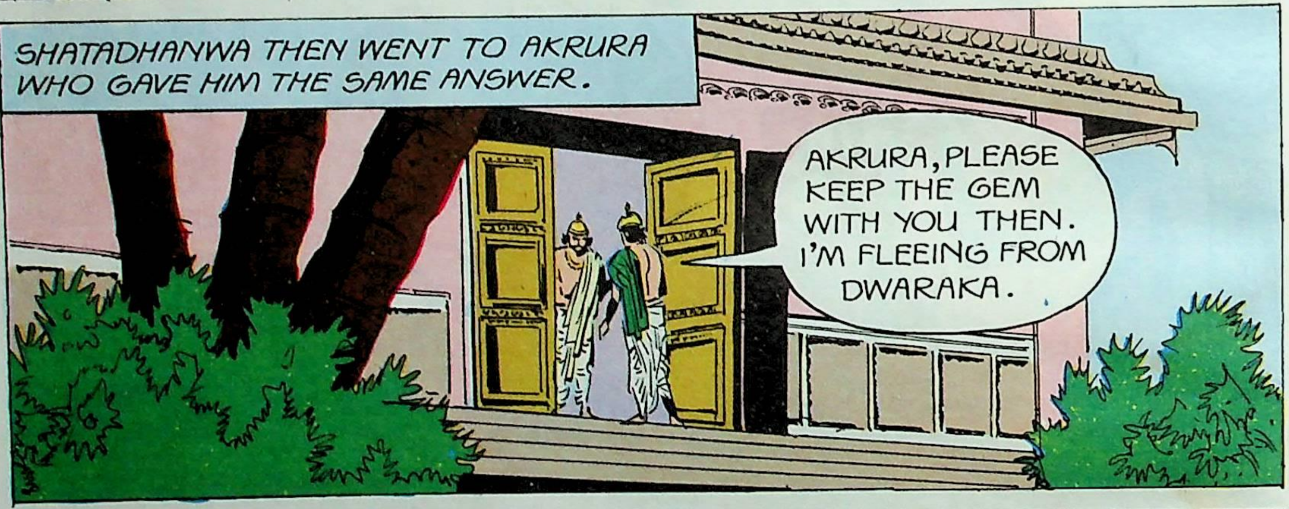

TAKING THE GEM...
...SHATADHANWA RODE AWAY.
THE WOMEN OF SATRAJIT'S HOUSE, SET UP LOUD LAMENTATIONS.
SATYABHAMA WAS HEART-BROKEN.
FATHER... FATHER...
SHE WENT TO KRISHNA WHO WAS IN HASTINAPURA.
LORD, MY FATHER HAS BEEN SLAIN.


YOU MUST BE BRAVE.

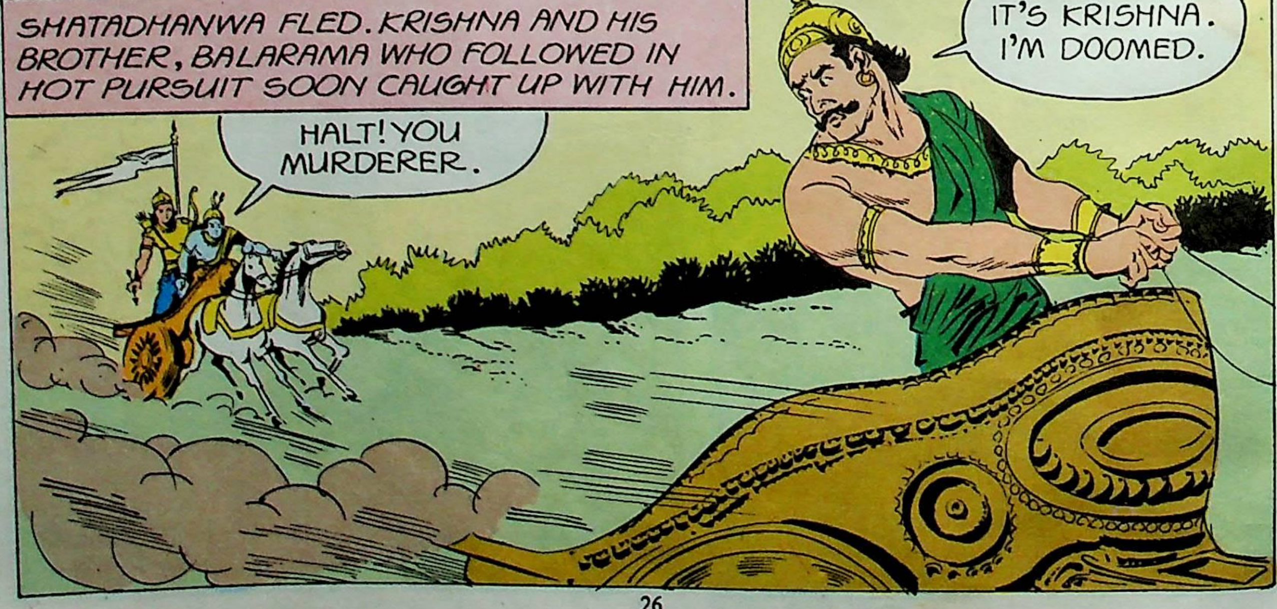
MEANWHILE THE GUILTY SHATADHANWA APPEALED TO KRITAVARMA.

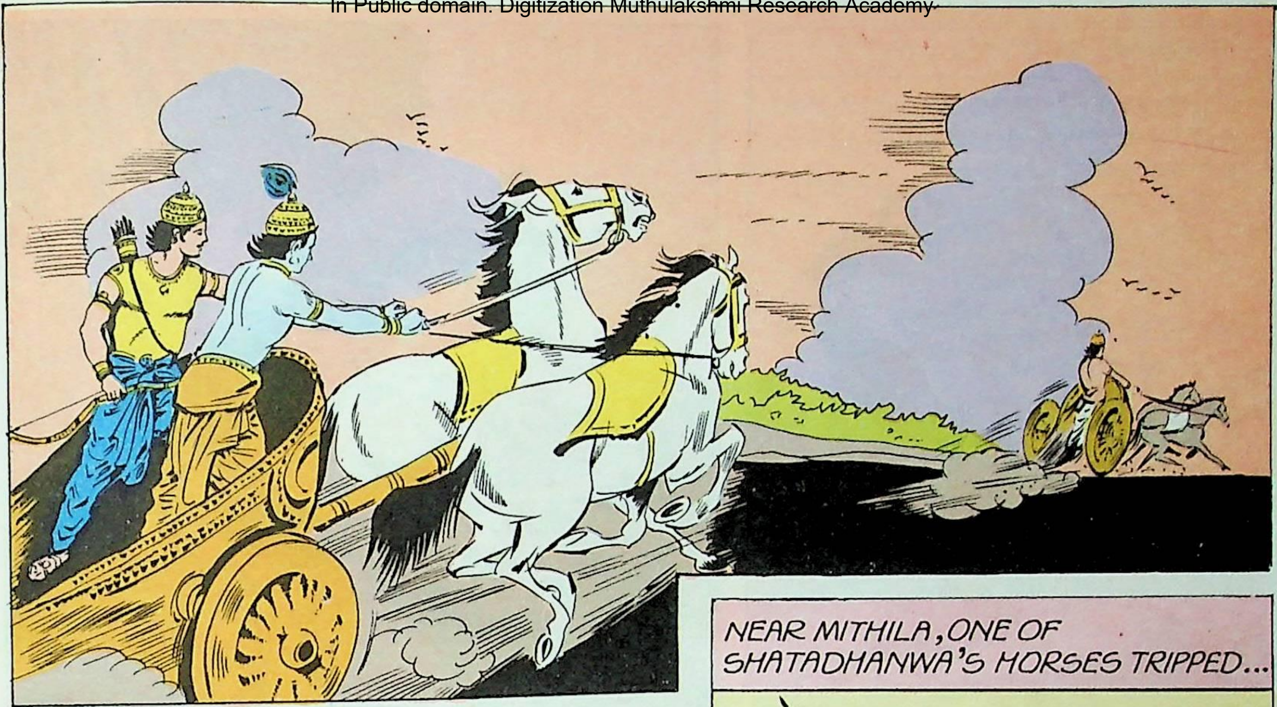

PLEASE, SHELTER ME FROM THE WRATH OF KRISHNA.
GO ELSEWHERE.

SHATADHANWA THEN WENT TO AKRURA WHO GAVE HIM THE SAME ANSWER.

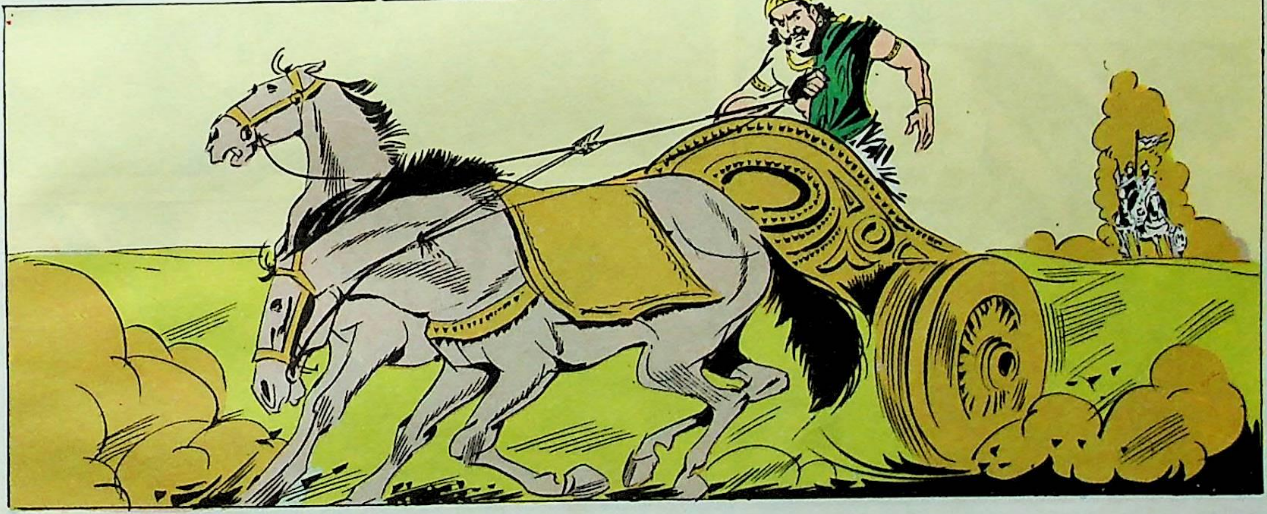

AKRURA, PLEASE KEEP THE GEM WITH YOU THEN. I'M FLEEING FROM DWARAKA.

SHATADHANWA FLED. KRISHNA AND HIS BROTHER, BALARAMA WHO FOLLOWED IN HOT PURSUIT SOON CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.

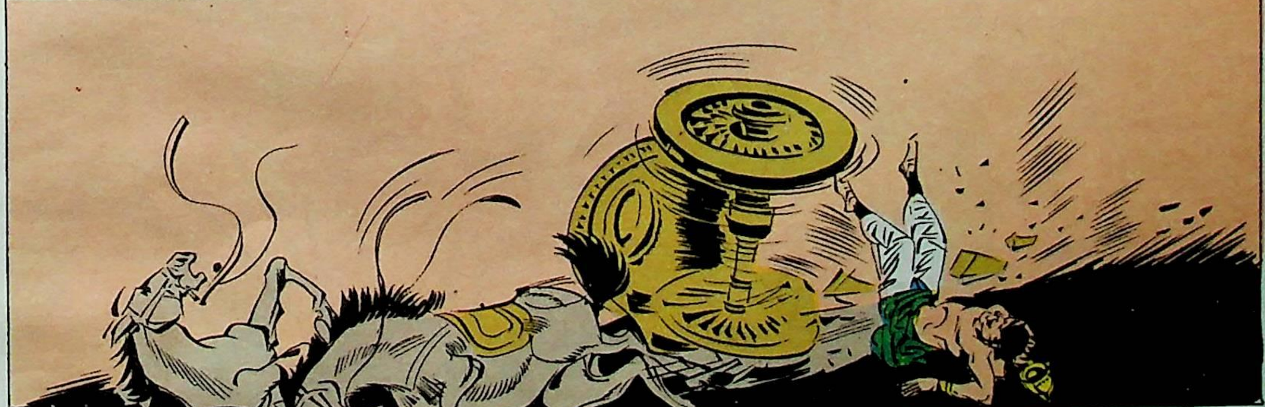

IT'S KRISHNA. I'M DOOMED.
HALT! YOU MURDERER.

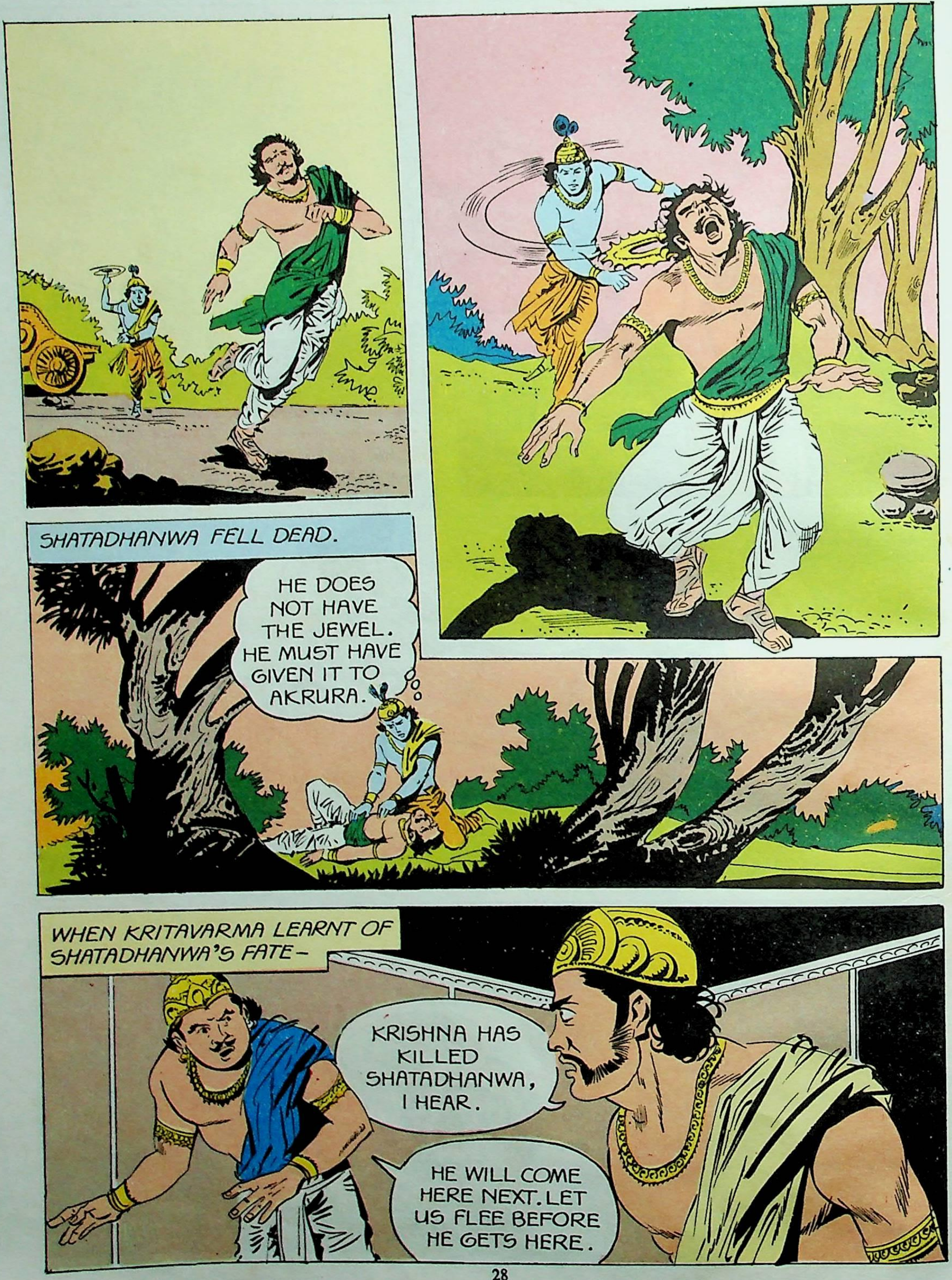


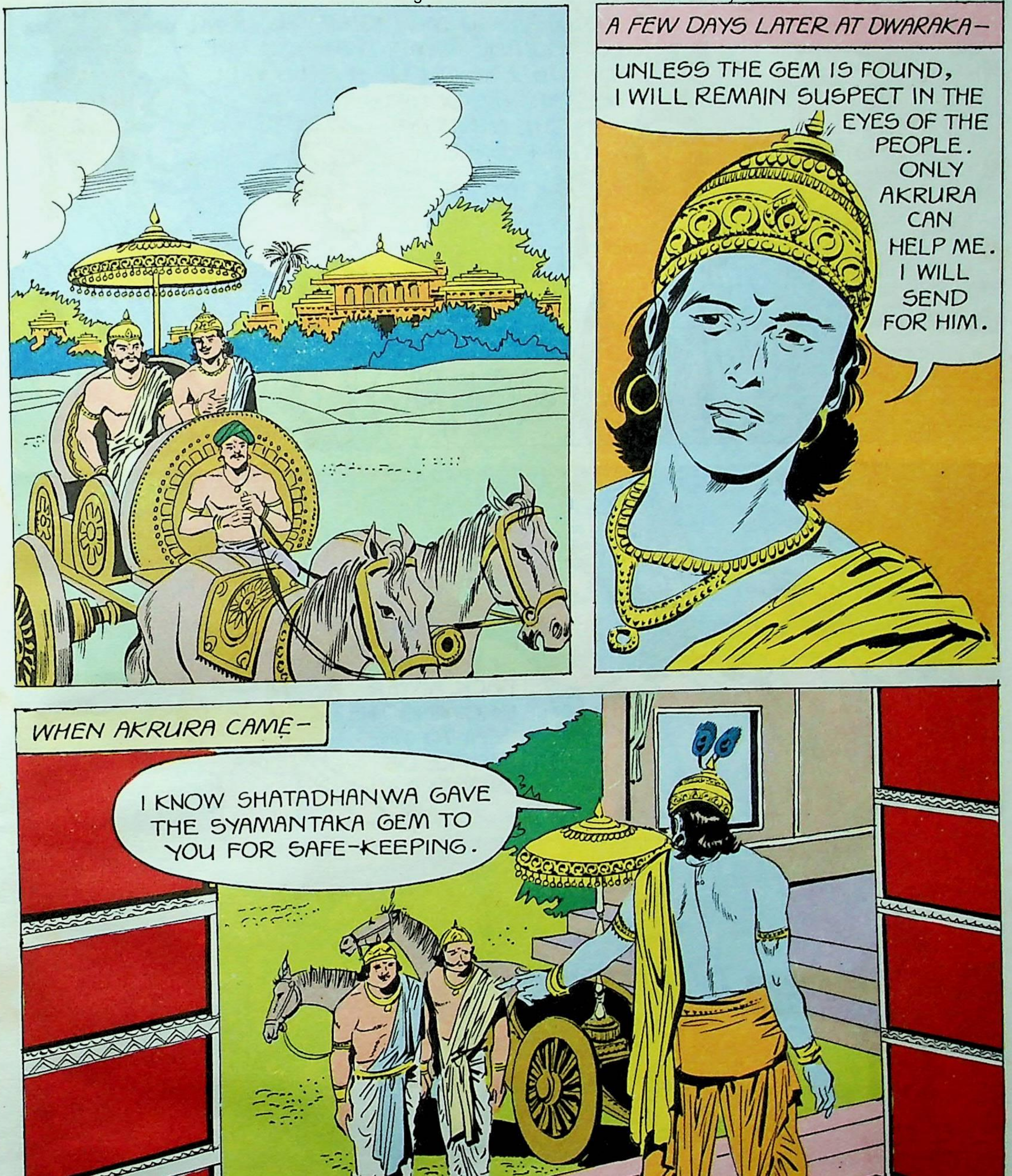
NEAR MITHILA, ONE OF SHATADHANWA'S HORSES TRIPPED...

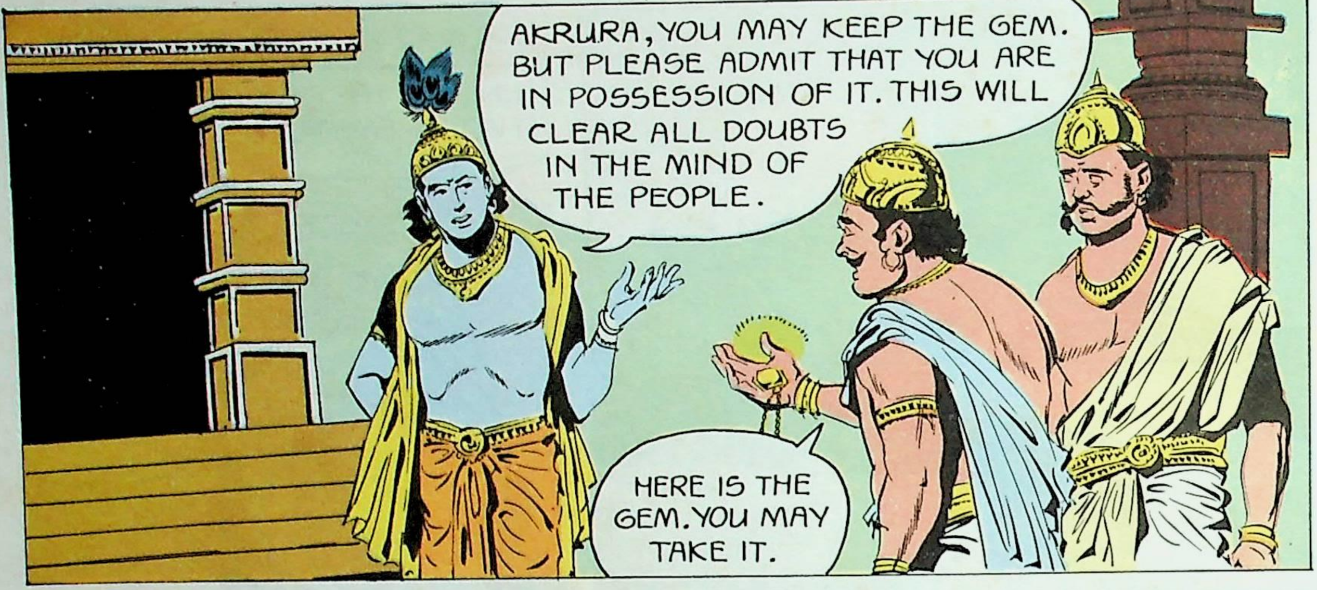


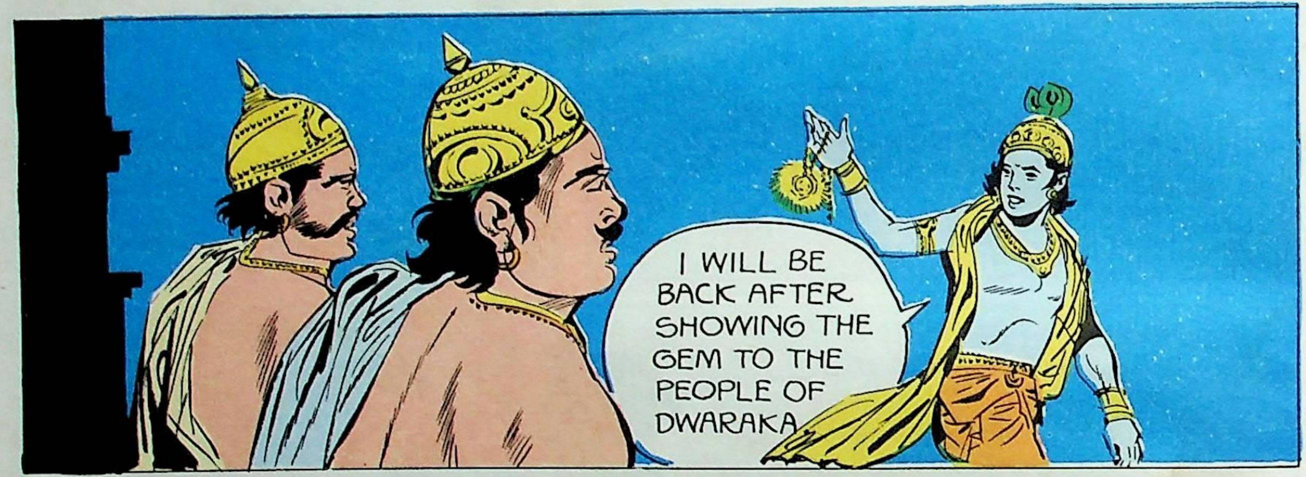
...AND FELL.

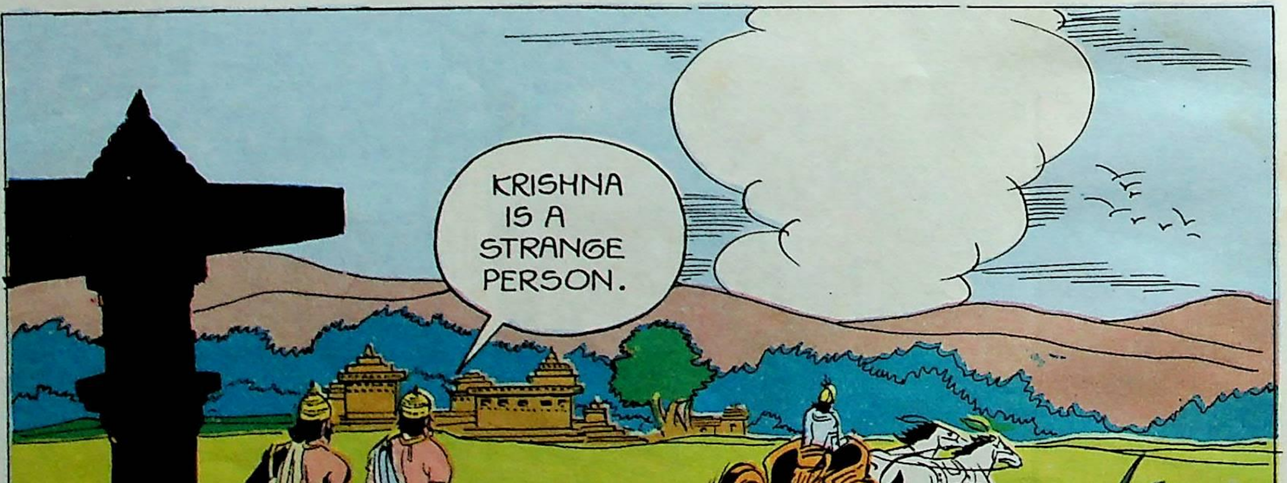


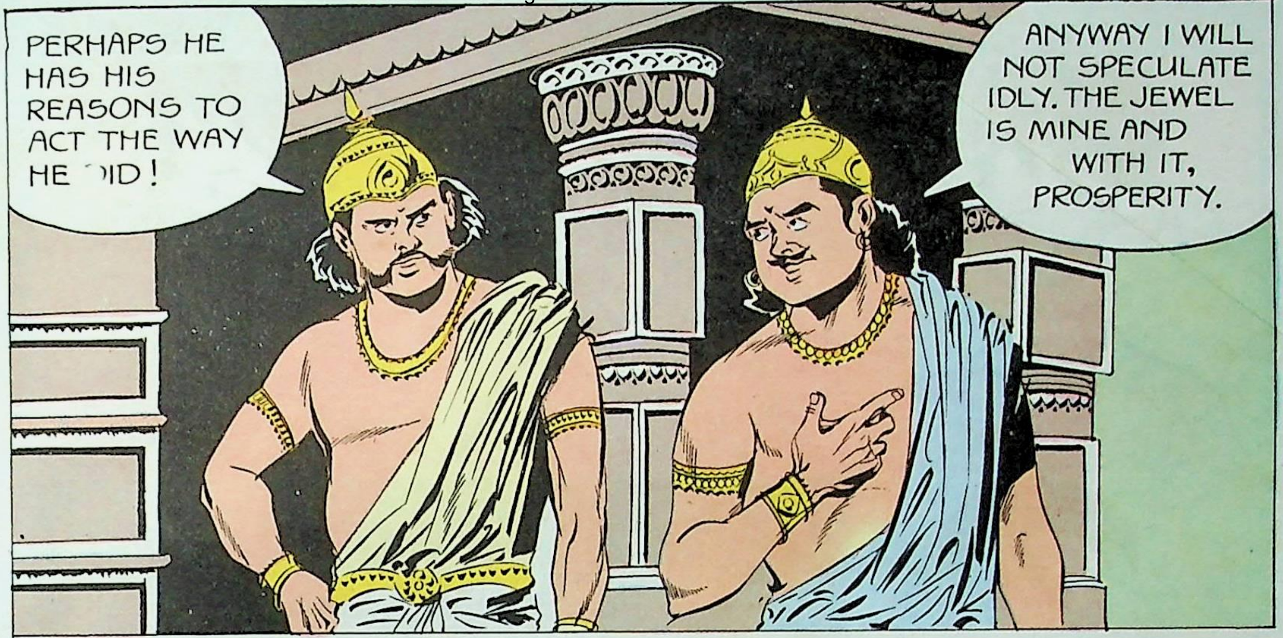

SHATADHANWA FELL DEAD.
HE DOES NOT HAVE THE JEWEL. HE MUST HAVE GIVEN IT TO AKRURA.
WHEN KRITAVARMA LEARNT OF SHATADHANWA'S FATE–
KRISHNA HAS KILLED SHATADHANWA, I HEAR.
HE WILL COME HERE NEXT. LET US FLEE BEFORE HE GETS HERE.

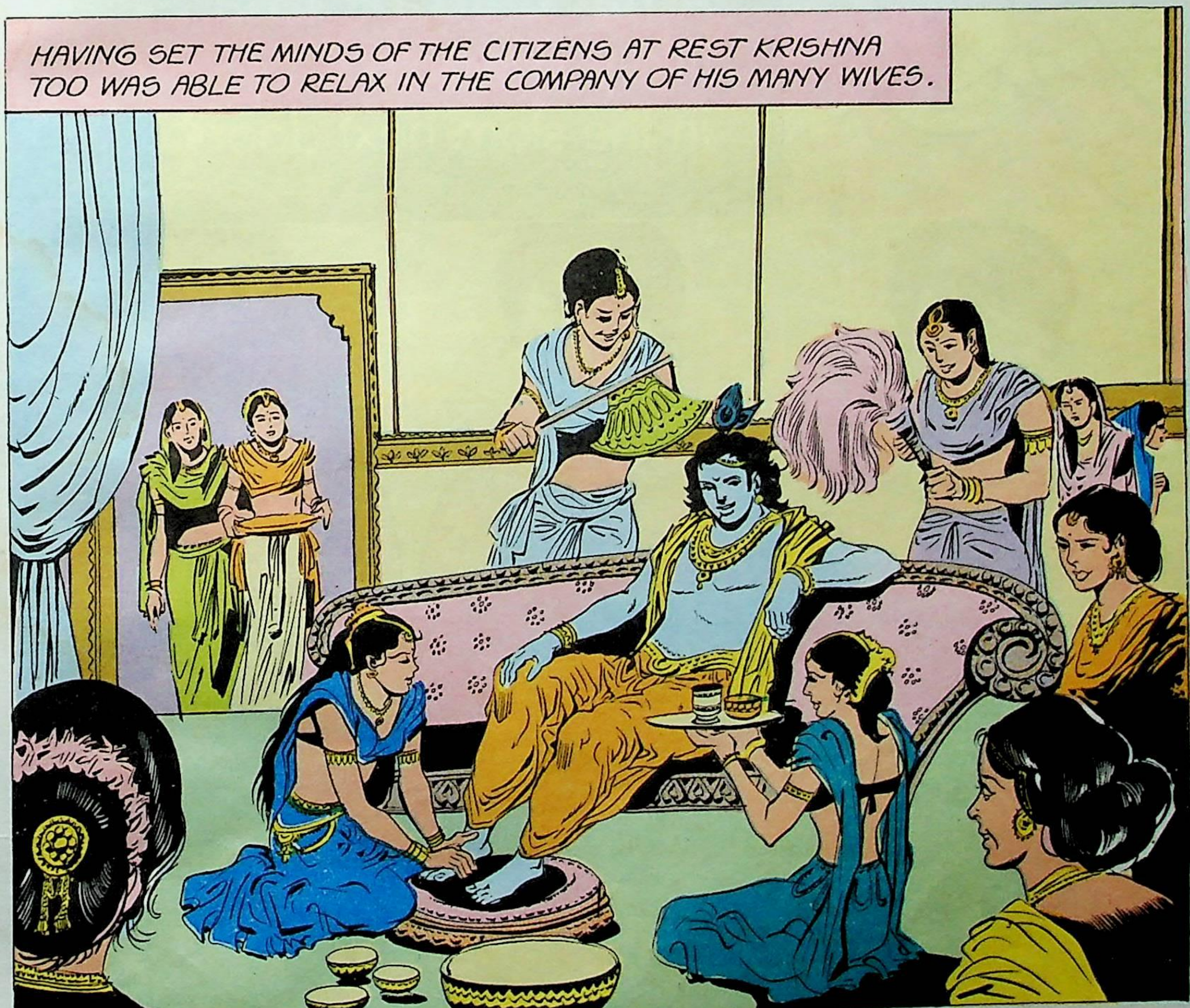

A FEW DAYS LATER AT DWARAKA—
UNLESS THE GEM IS FOUND, I WILL REMAIN SUSPECT IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE. ONLY AKRURA CAN HELP ME. I WILL SEND FOR HIM.
WHEN AKRURA CAME—
I KNOW SHATADHANWA GAVE THE SYAMANTAKA GEM TO YOU FOR SAFE-KEEPING.

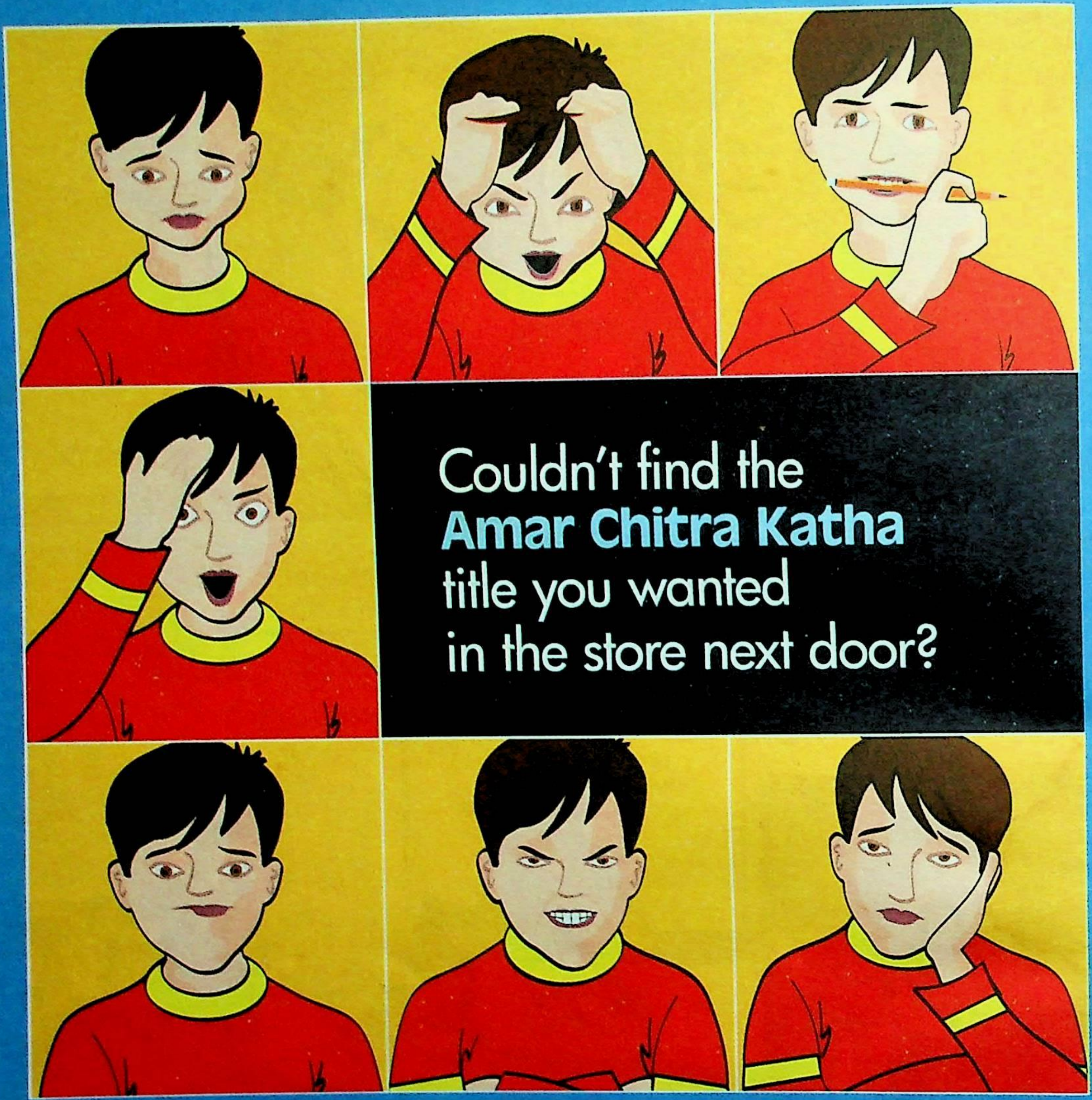

AKRURA, YOU MAY KEEP THE GEM. BUT PLEASE ADMIT THAT YOU ARE IN POSSESSION OF IT. THIS WILL CLEAR ALL DOUBTS IN THE MIND OF THE PEOPLE.
HERE IS THE GEM. YOU MAY TAKE IT.


I WILL BE BACK AFTER SHOWING THE GEM TO THE PEOPLE OF DWARAKA


KRISHNA IS A STRANGE PERSON.


PERHAPS HE HAS HIS REASONS TO ACT THE WAY HE DID!
ANYWAY I WILL NOT SPECULATE IDLY. THE JEWEL IS MINE AND WITH IT, PROSPERITY.


HAVING SET THE MINDS OF THE CITIZENS AT REST KRISHNA TOO WAS ABLE TO RELAX IN THE COMPANY OF HIS MANY WIVES.



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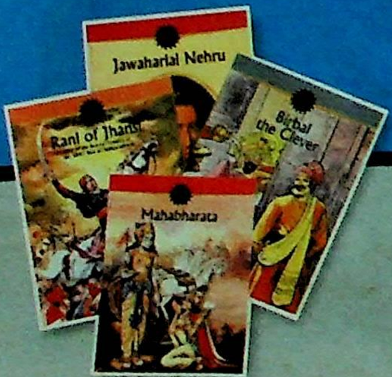
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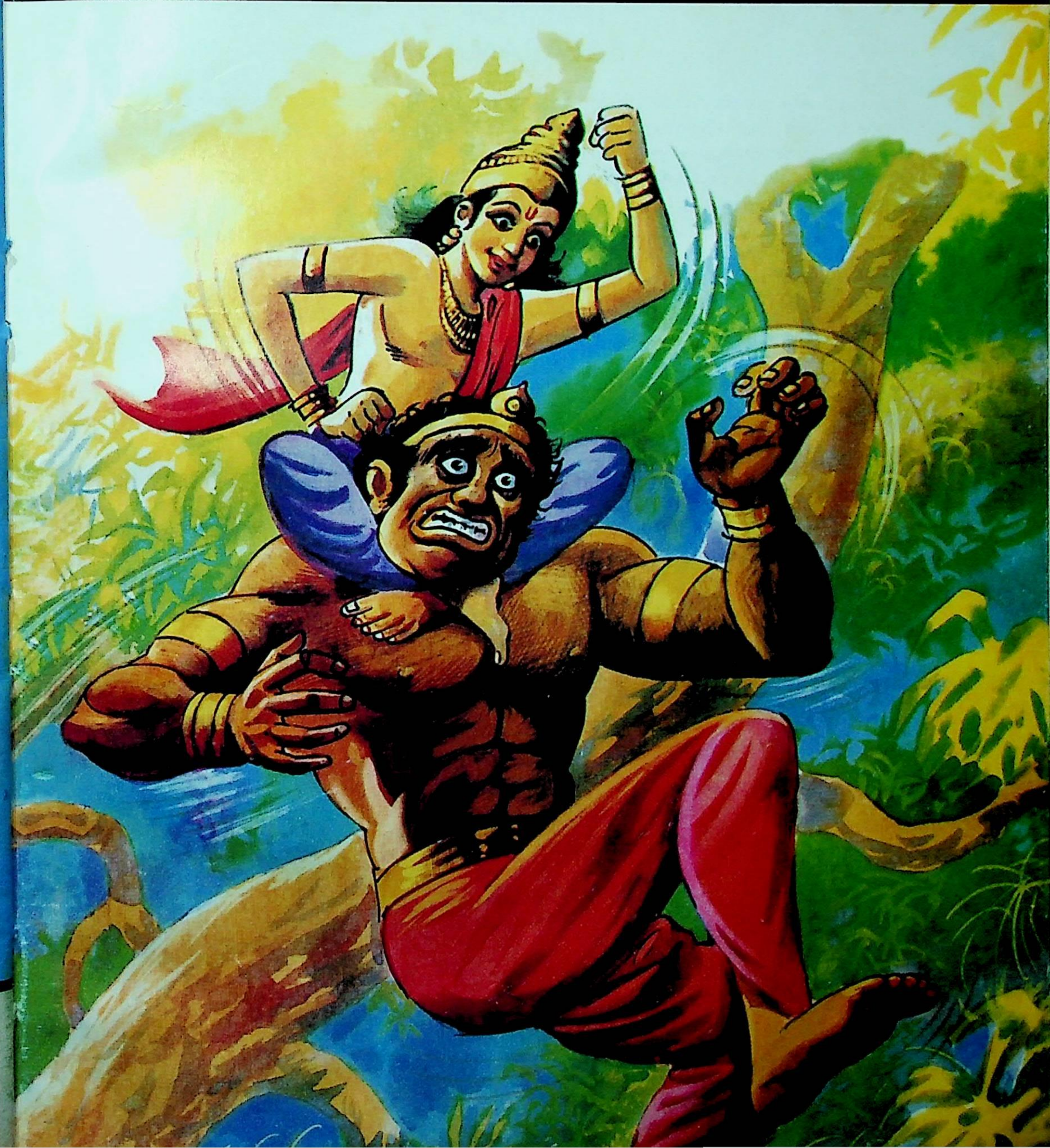

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TALES OF BALARAMA

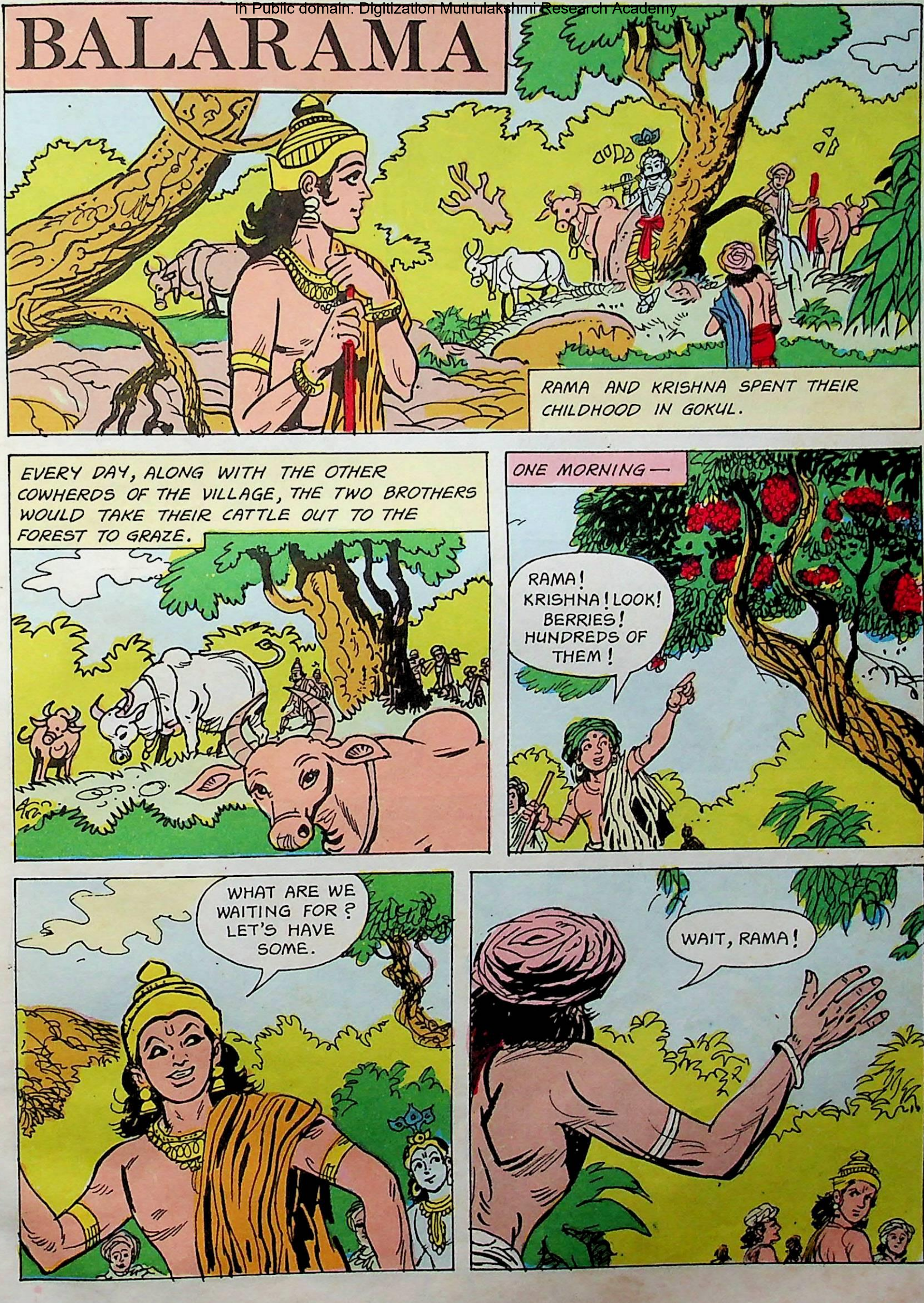
Balarama was not only Krishna's brother, he was his right-hand man. Together they made quite a team. Balarama's amazing strength and courage made dangerous demons like Dhenukasura and Pralamba look like weaklings. He even tamed the Yamuna river which had meandered away from Vrindavan and brought it back to the people who needed it.

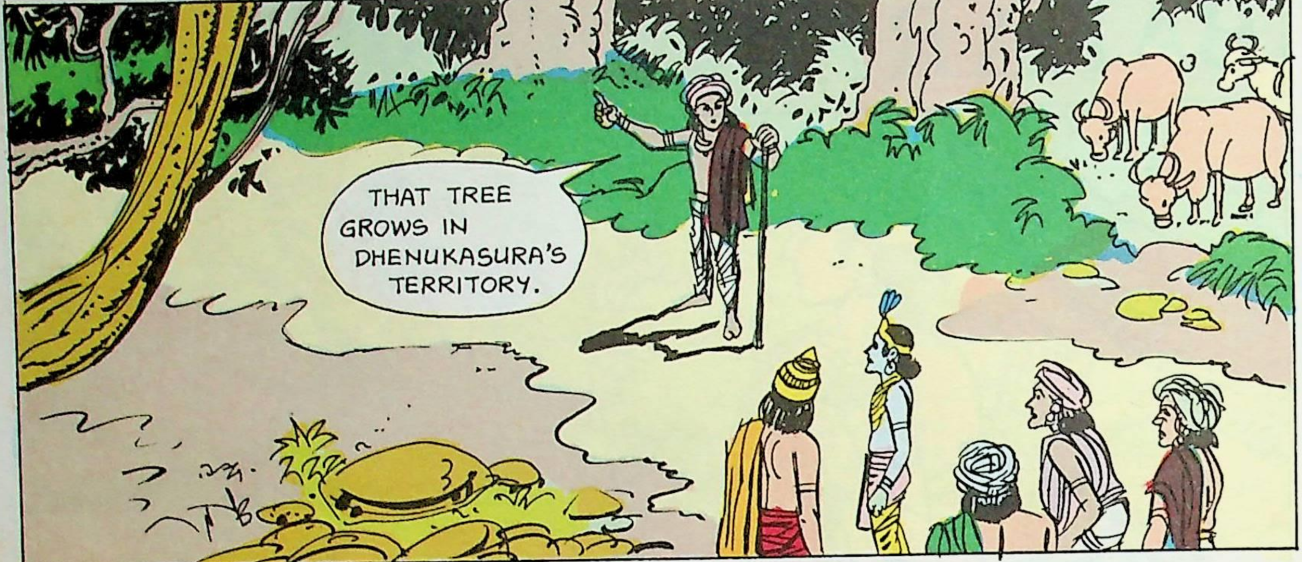
Script
Meera Ugra

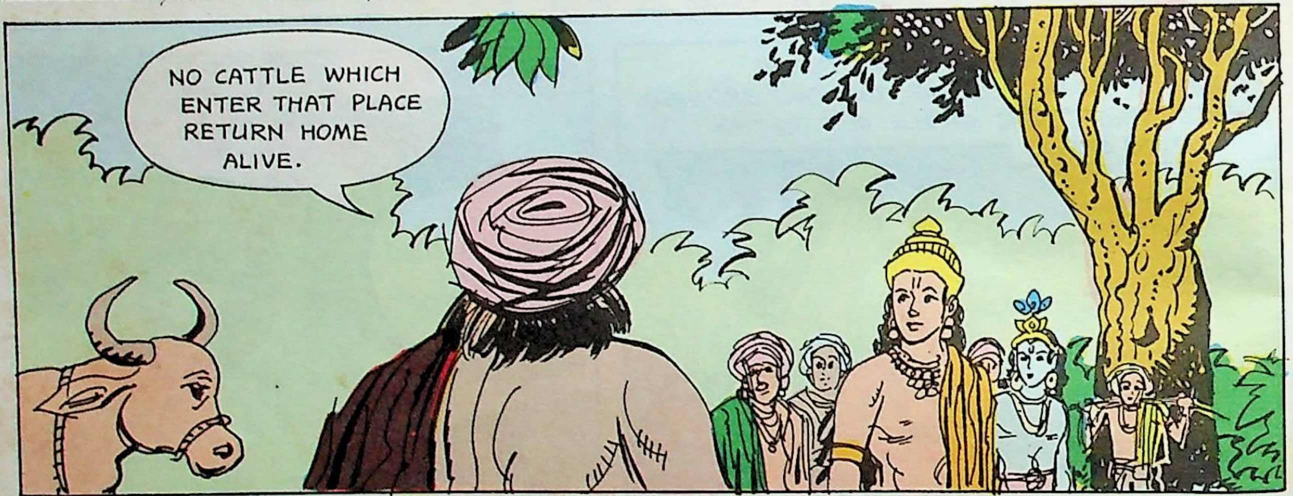
Illustrations
Ram Waeerkar

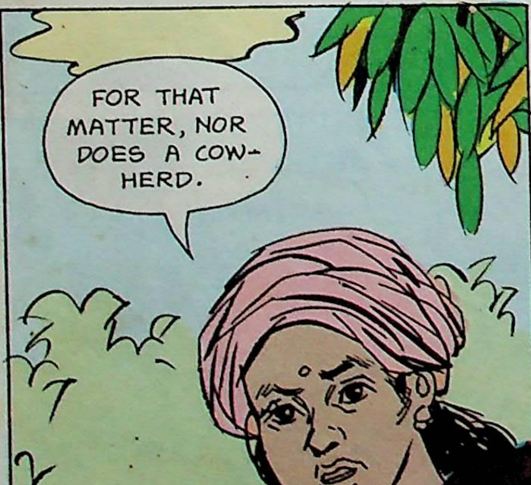
Editor
Anant Pai

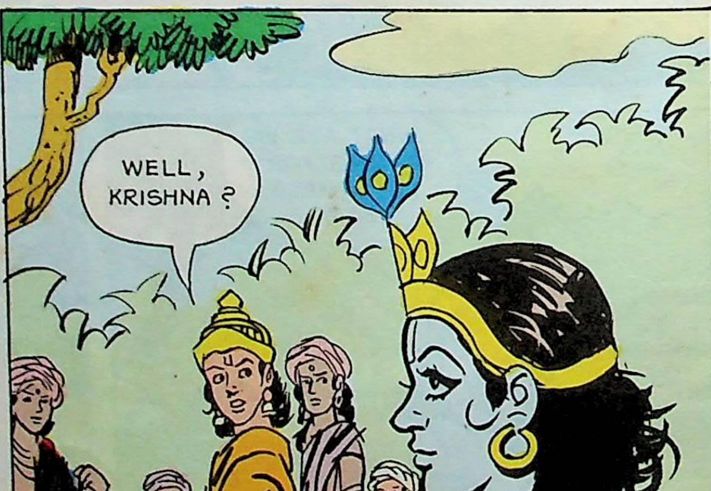
BALARAMA

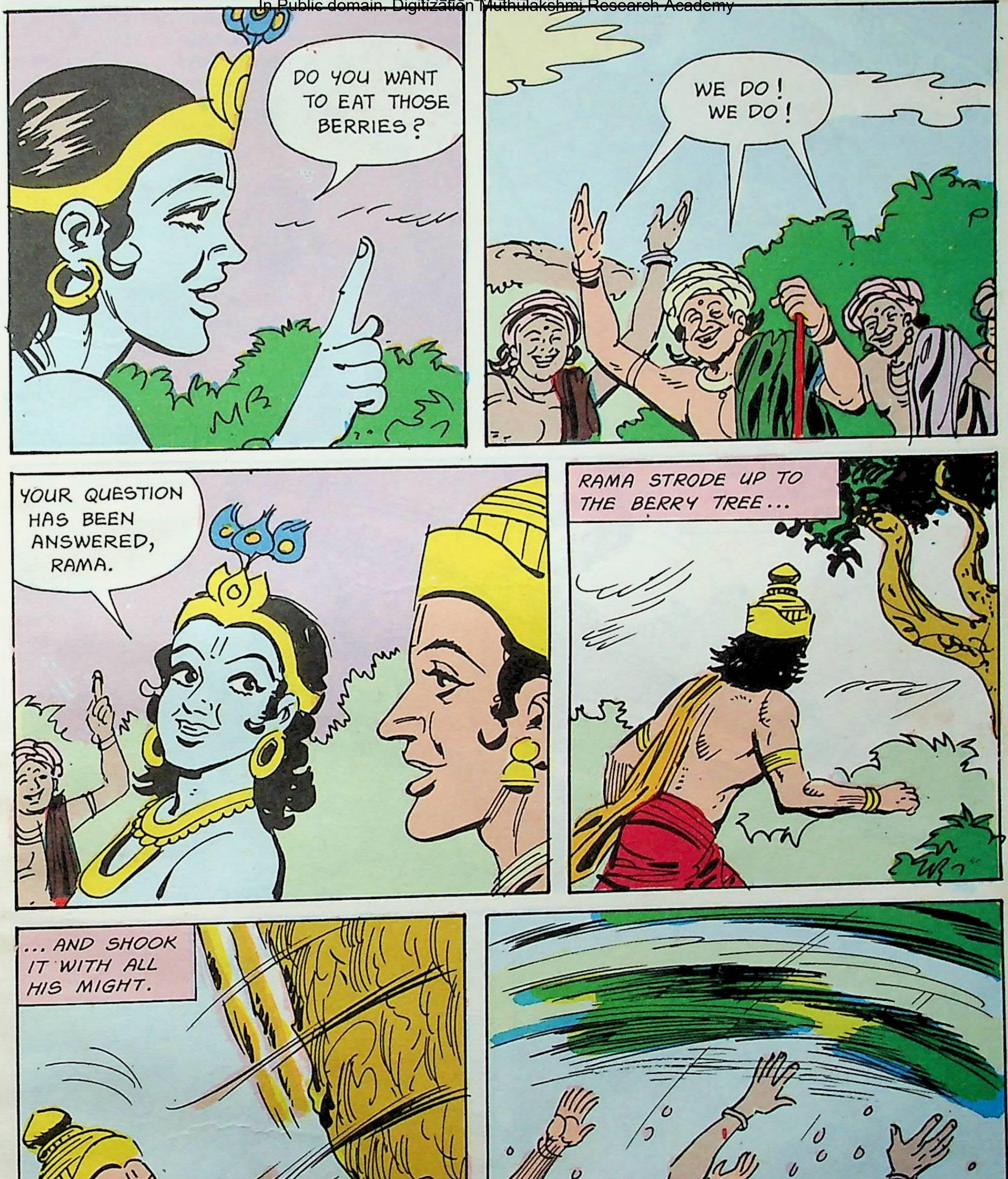

RAMA AND KRISHNA SPENT THEIR CHILDHOOD IN GOKUL.
EVERY DAY, ALONG WITH THE OTHER COWHERDS OF THE VILLAGE, THE TWO BROTHERS WOULD TAKE THEIR CATTLE OUT TO THE FOREST TO GRAZE.
ONE MORNING —
RAMA! KRISHNA! LOOK! BERRIES! HUNDREDS OF THEM!
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? LET'S HAVE SOME.
WAIT, RAMA!

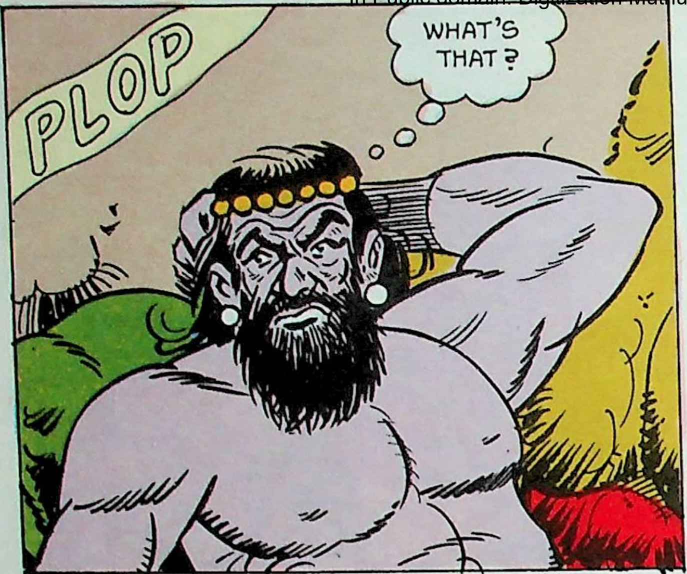

THAT TREE GROWS IN DHENUKASURA'S TERRITORY.

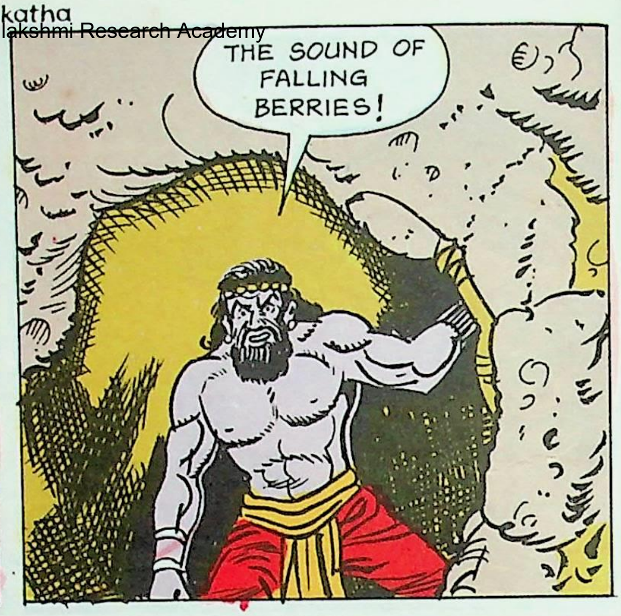

NO CATTLE WHICH ENTER THAT PLACE RETURN HOME ALIVE.

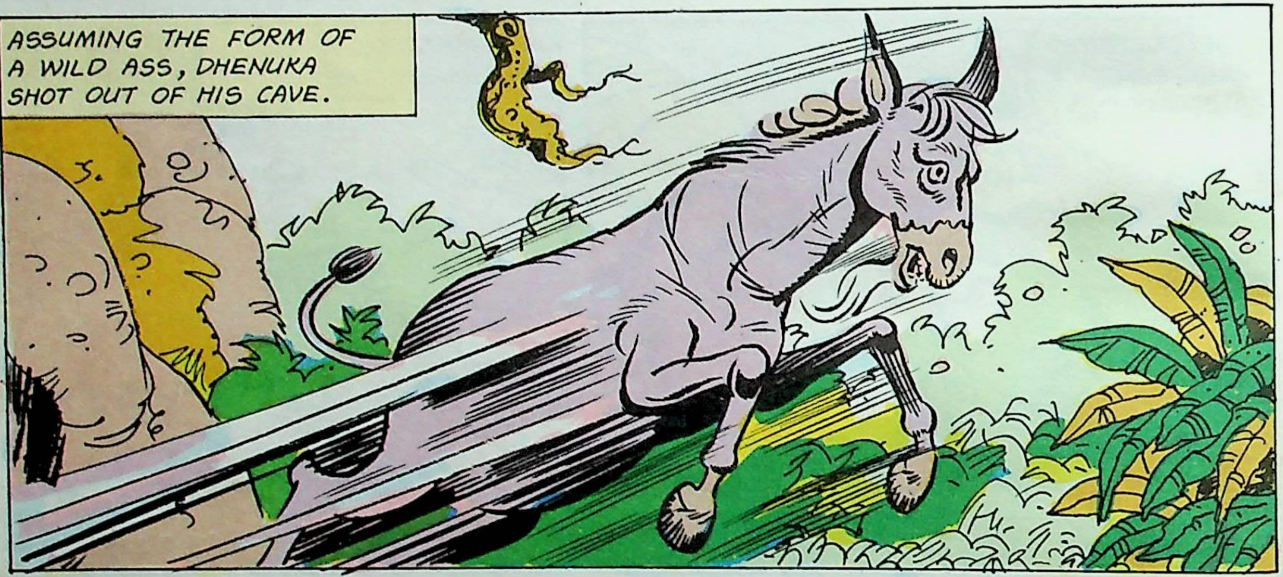

FOR THAT MATTER, NOR DOES A COW-HERD.

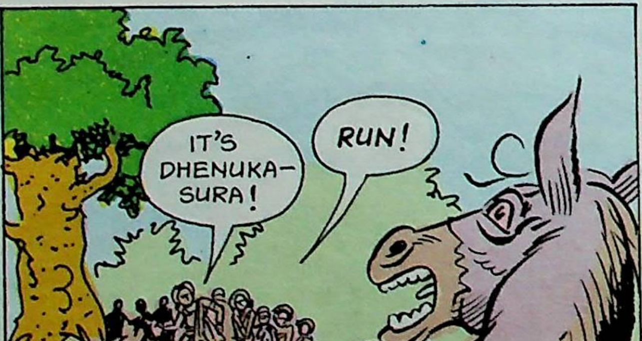

WELL, KRISHNA ?

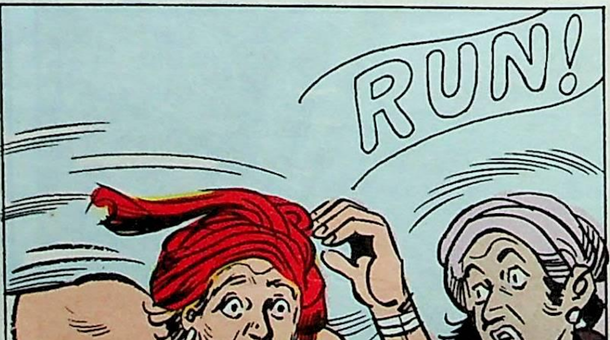

DO YOU WANT TO EAT THOSE BERRIES ?
WE DO ! WE DO !
YOUR QUESTION HAS BEEN ANSWERED, RAMA.
RAMA STRODE UP TO THE BERRY TREE ...
... AND SHOOK IT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.

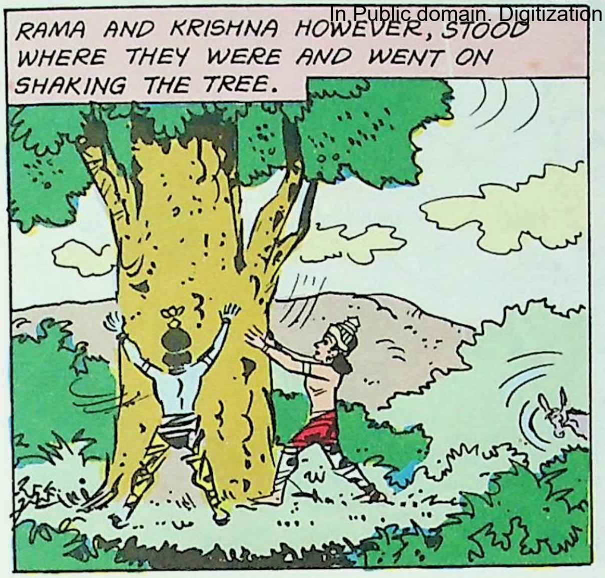

PLOP
WHAT'S THAT ?

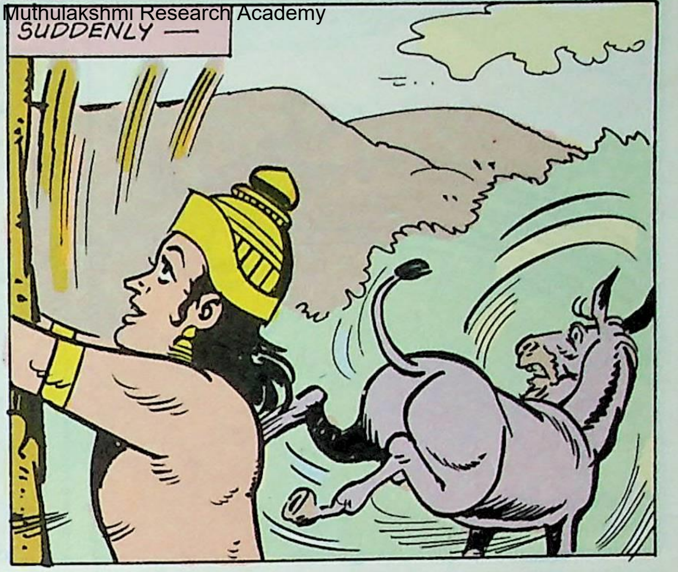

THE SOUND OF FALLING BERRIES !

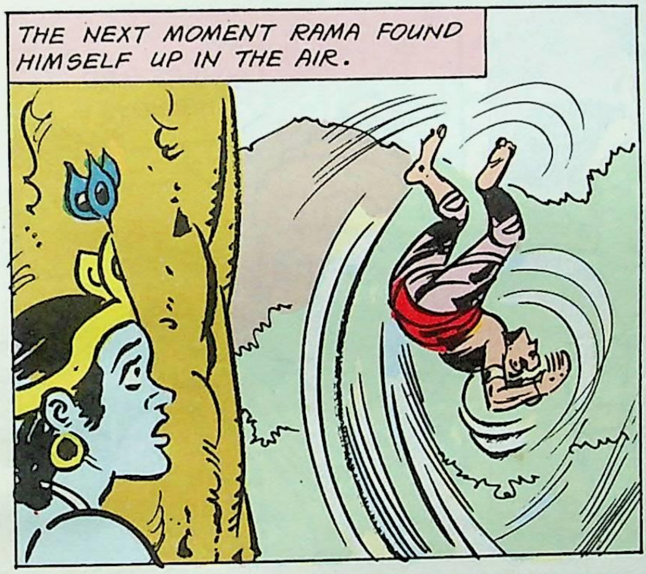

ASSUMING THE FORM OF A WILD ASS, DHENUKA SHOT OUT OF HIS CAVE.

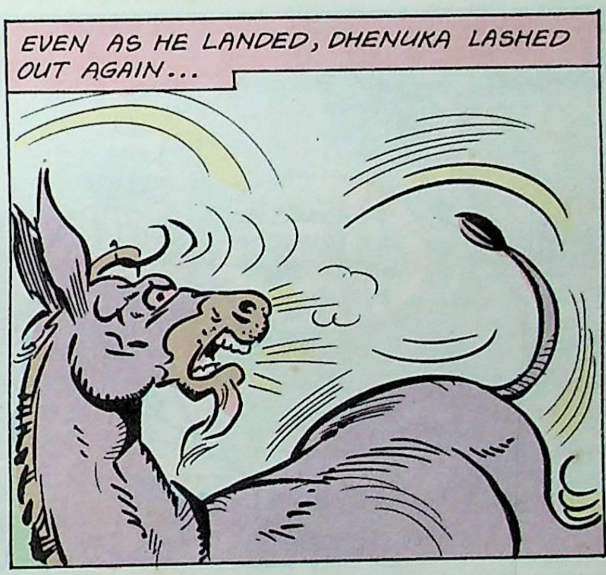

IT'S DHENUKASURA !
RUN !

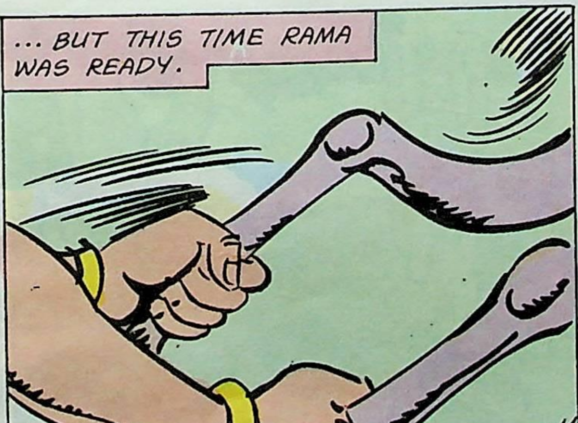

RUN!

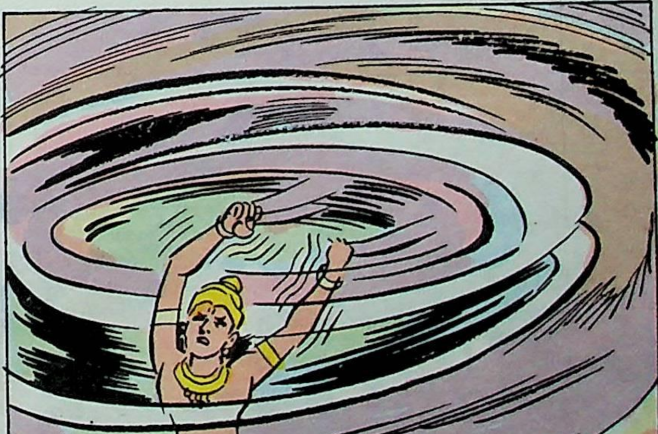

RAMA AND KRISHNA HOWEVER, STOOD WHERE THEY WERE AND WENT ON SHAKING THE TREE.

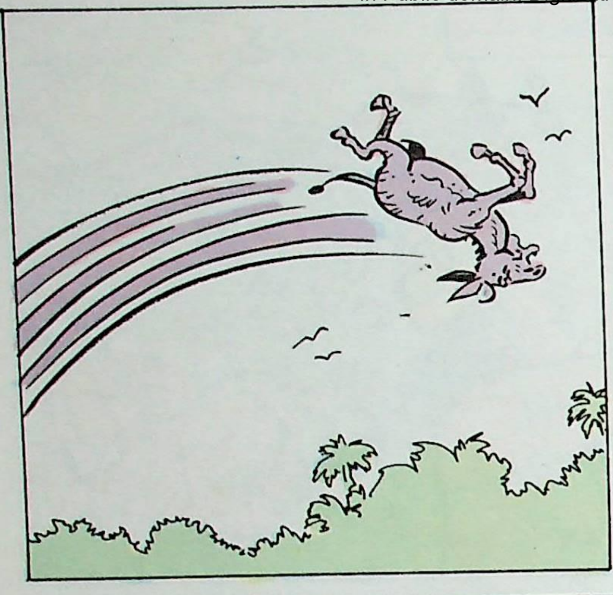

SUDDENLY —

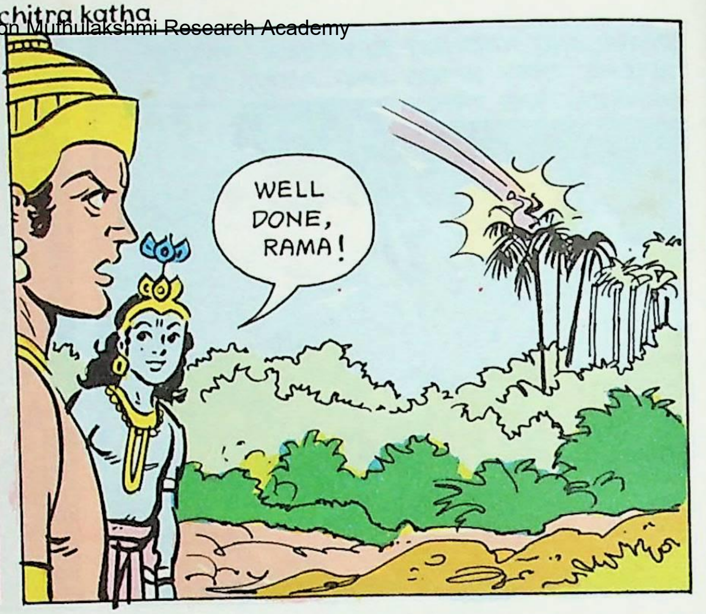

THE NEXT MOMENT RAMA FOUND HIMSELF UP IN THE AIR.

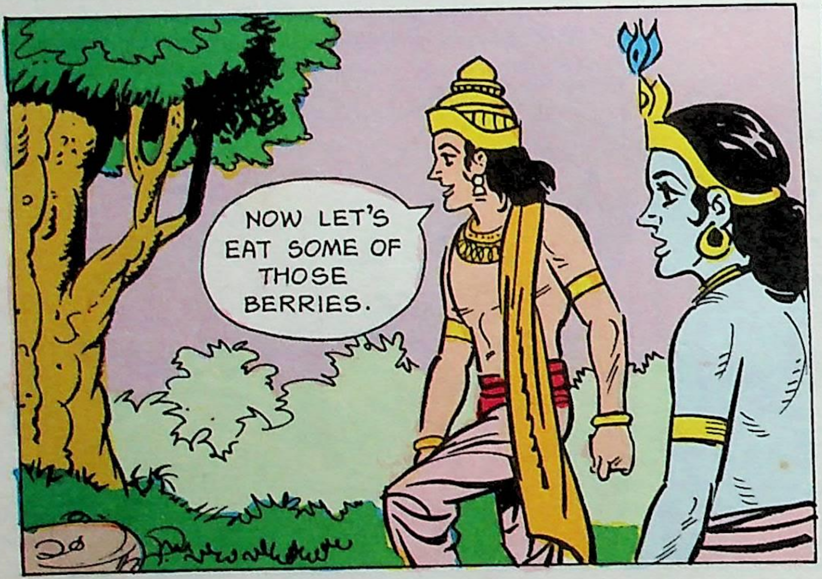

EVEN AS HE LANDED, DHENUKA LASHED OUT AGAIN ...

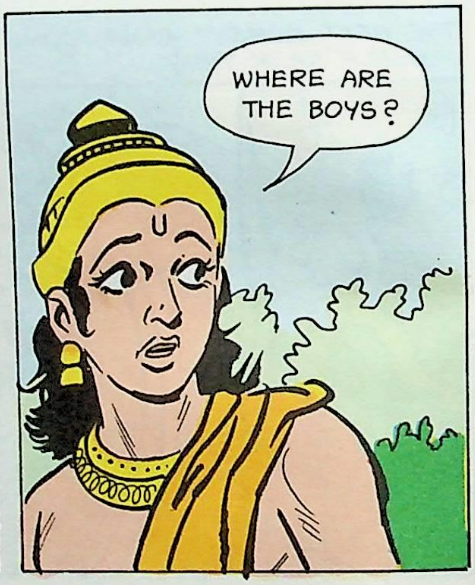

... BUT THIS TIME RAMA WAS READY.

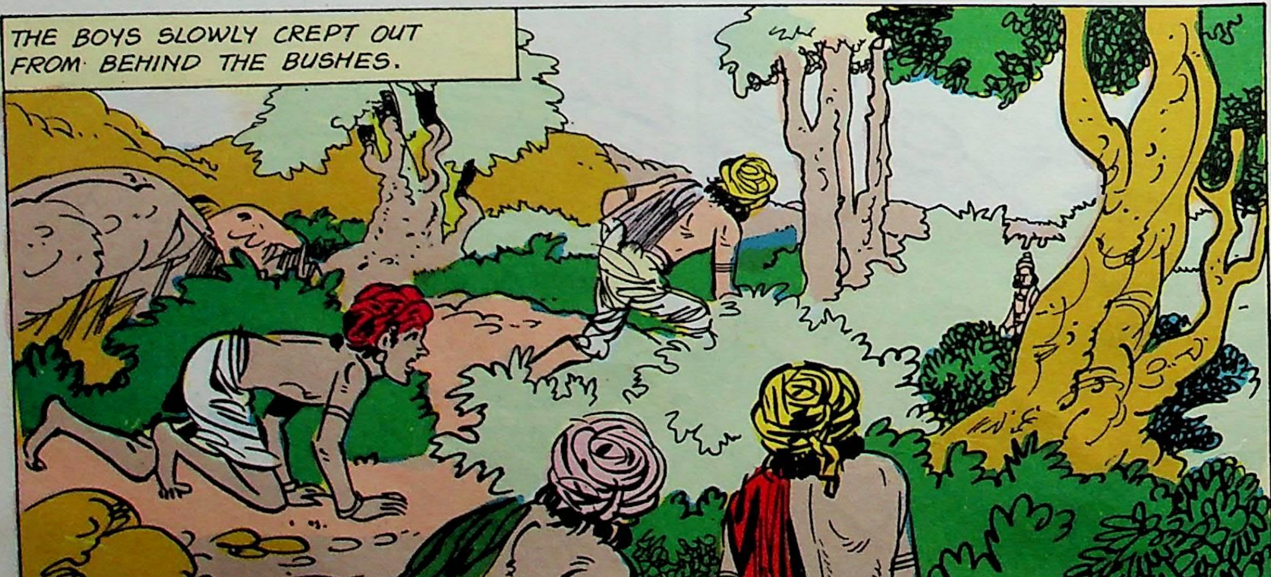


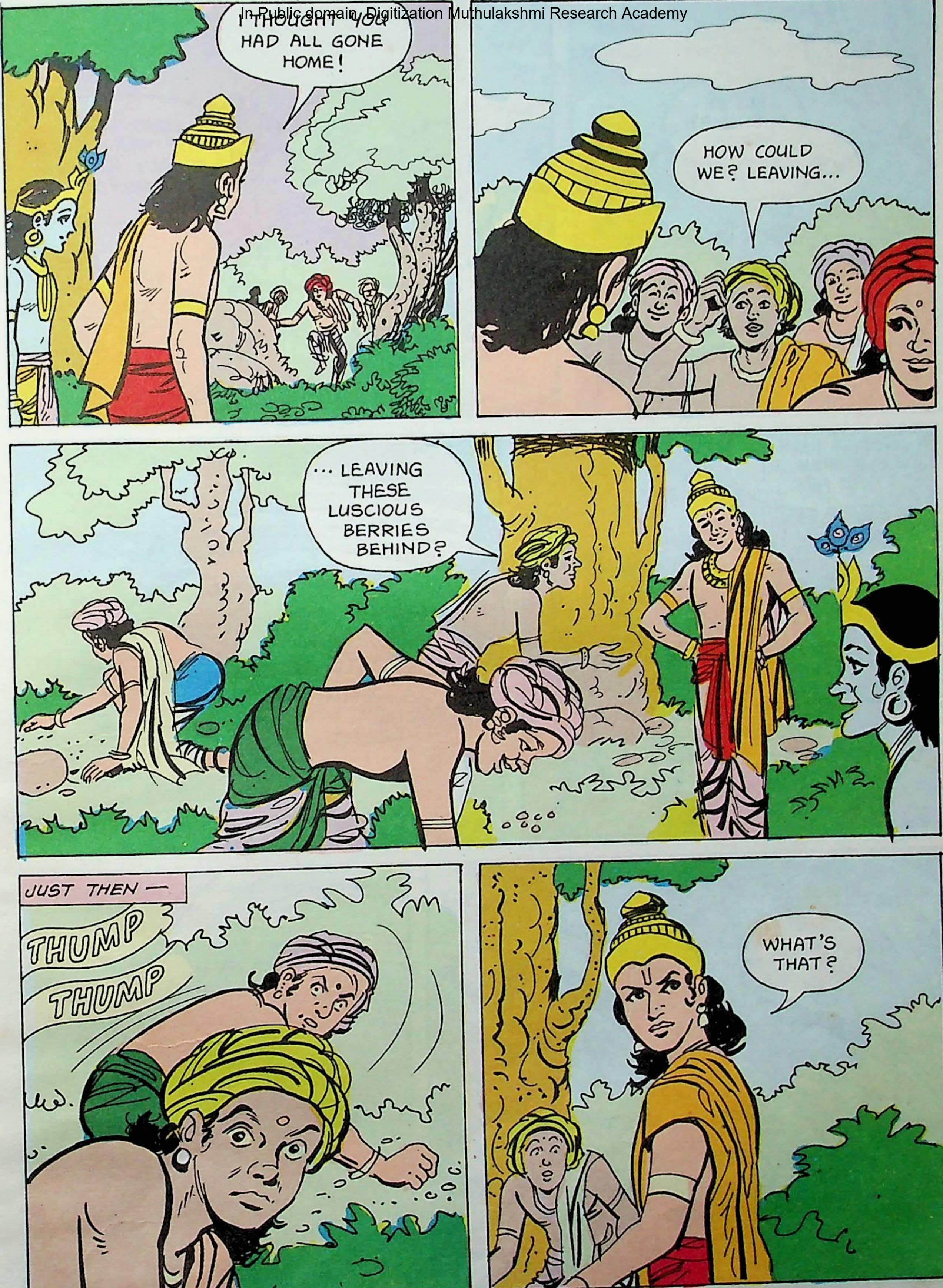


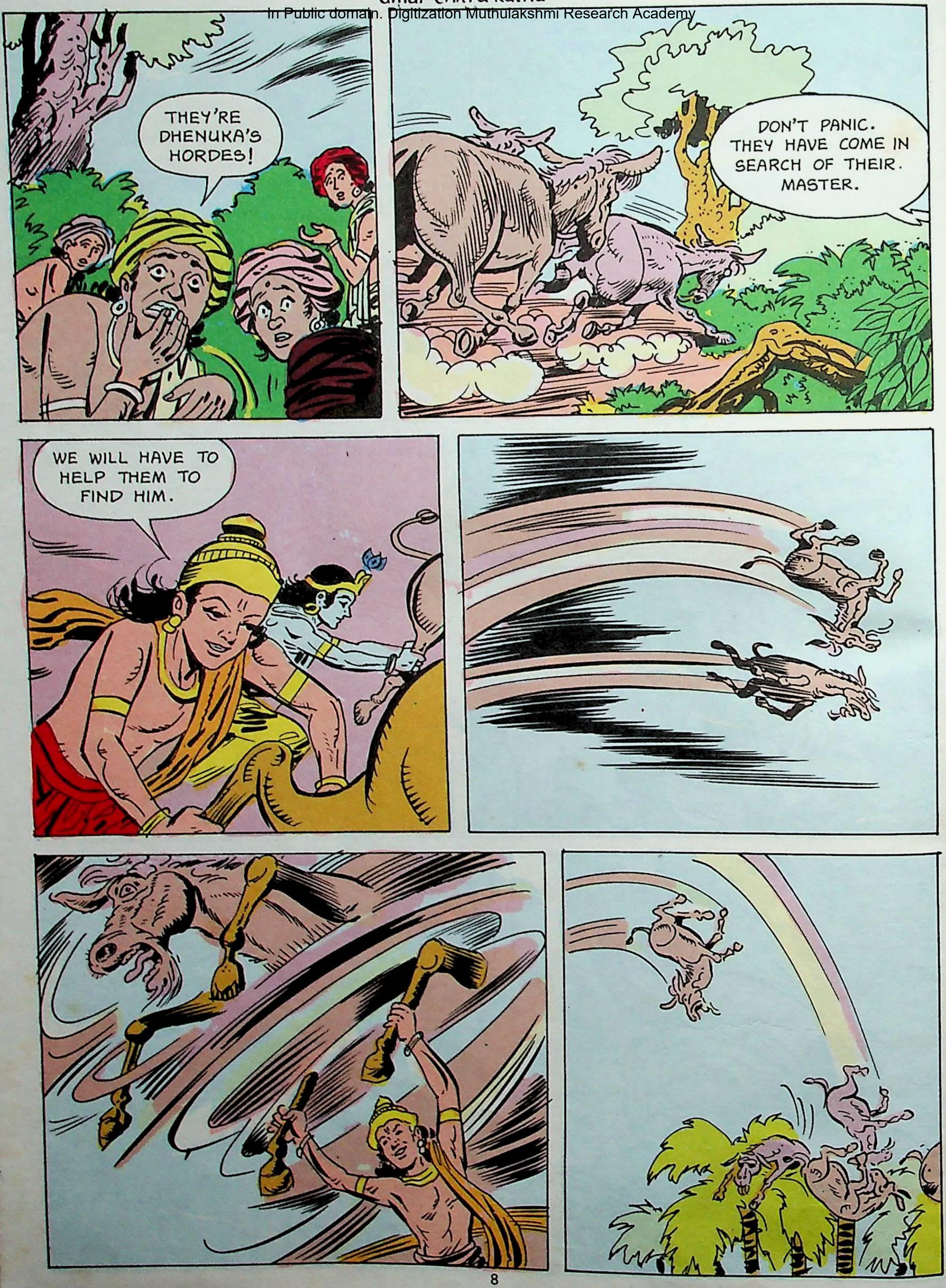

WELL DONE, RAMA!

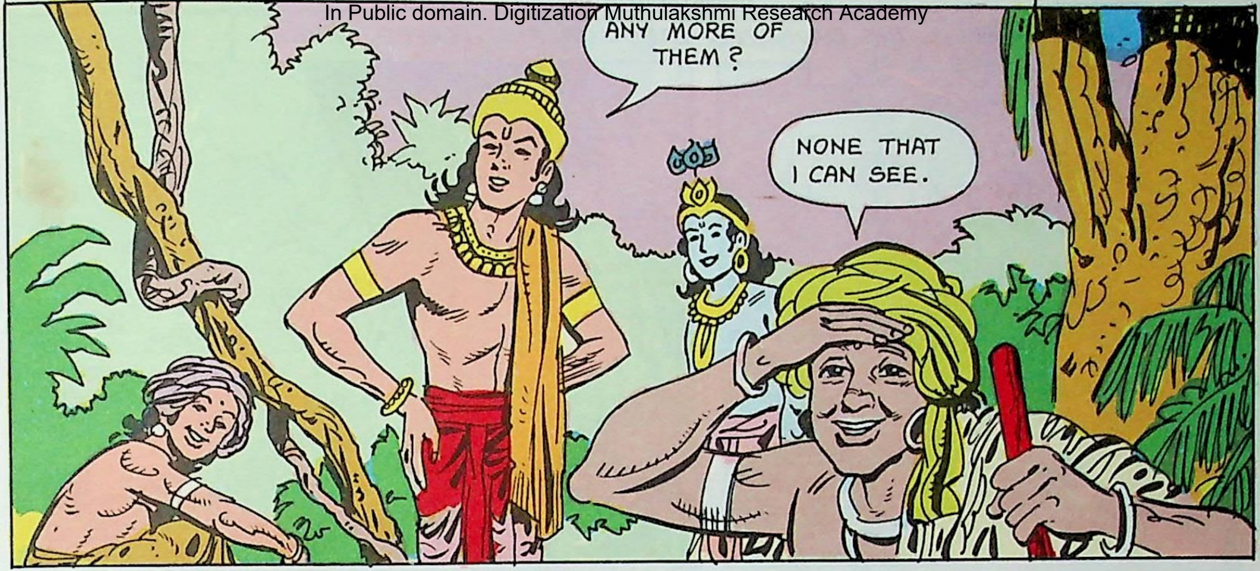

NOW LET'S EAT SOME OF THOSE BERRIES.

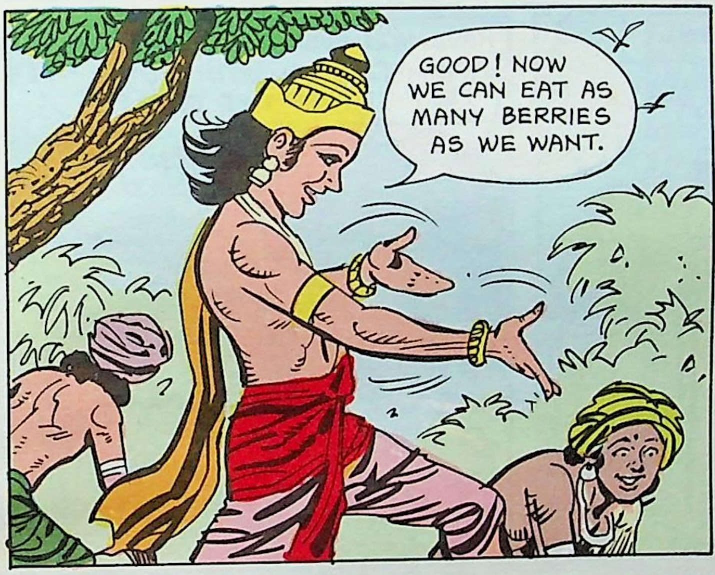

WHERE ARE THE BOYS?

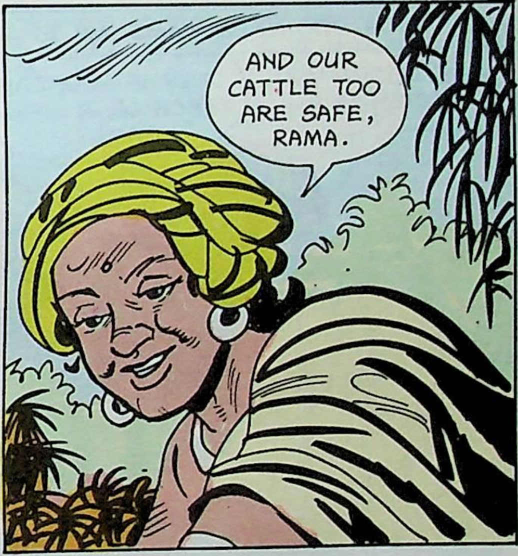

THE BOYS SLOWLY CREPT OUT FROM BEHIND THE BUSHES.

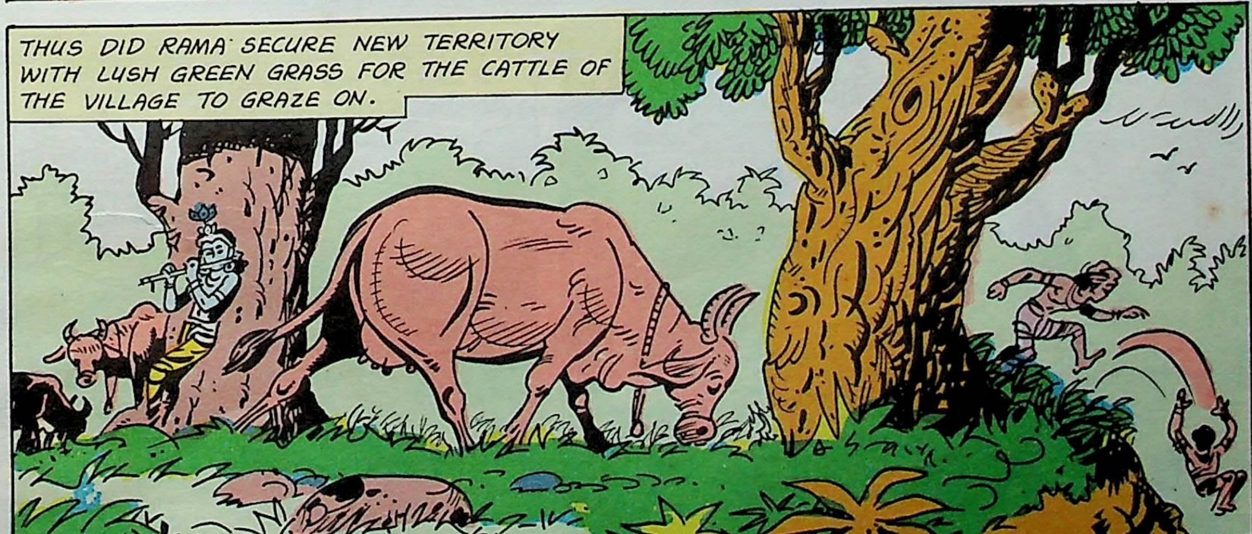

I THOUGHT YOU HAD ALL GONE HOME!
HOW COULD WE? LEAVING...
... LEAVING THESE LUSCIOUS BERRIES BEHIND?
JUST THEN —
THUMP
THUMP
WHAT'S THAT?

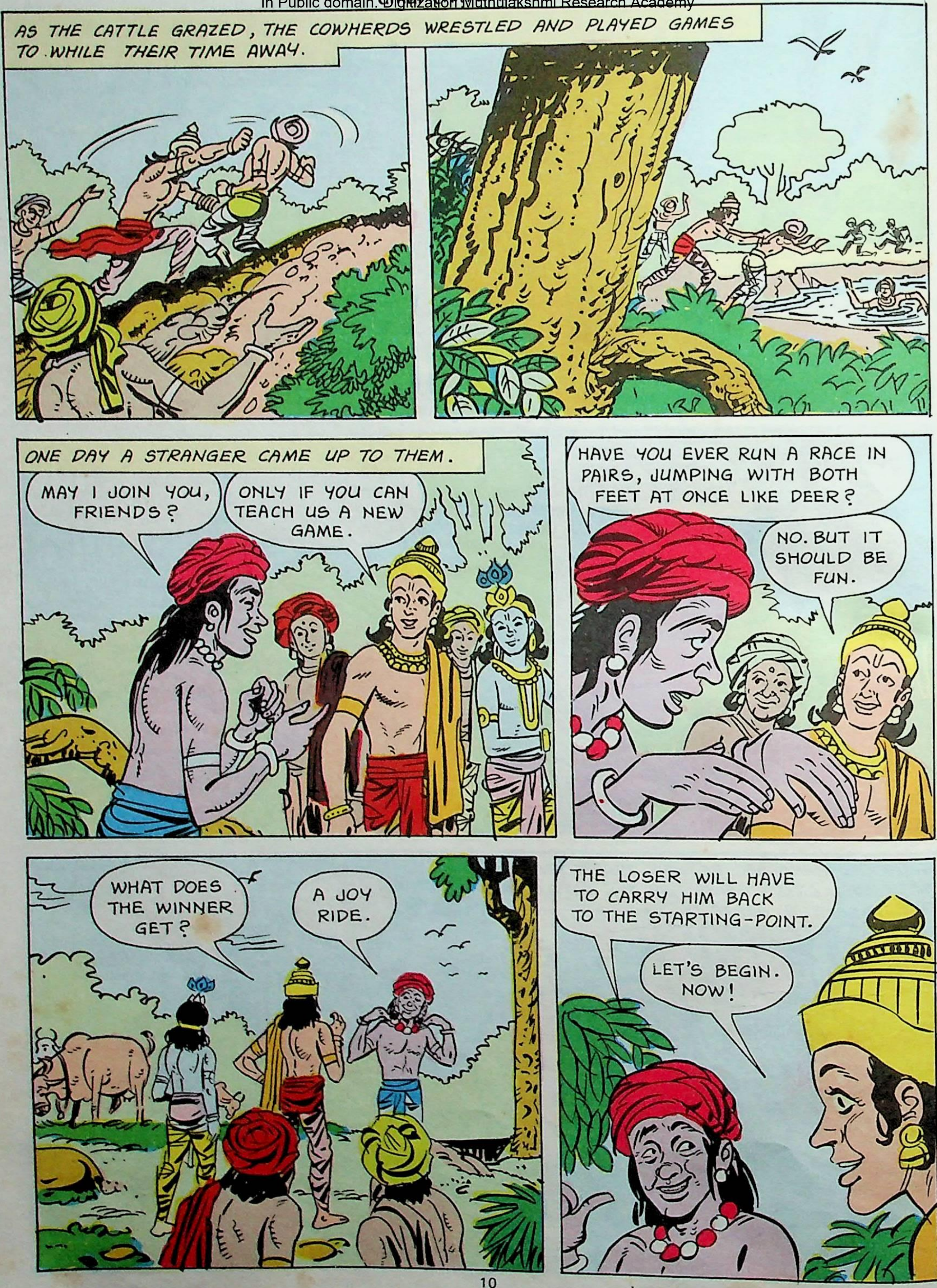

THEY'RE DHENUKA'S HORDES!
DON'T PANIC. THEY HAVE COME IN SEARCH OF THEIR. MASTER.
WE WILL HAVE TO HELP THEM TO FIND HIM.

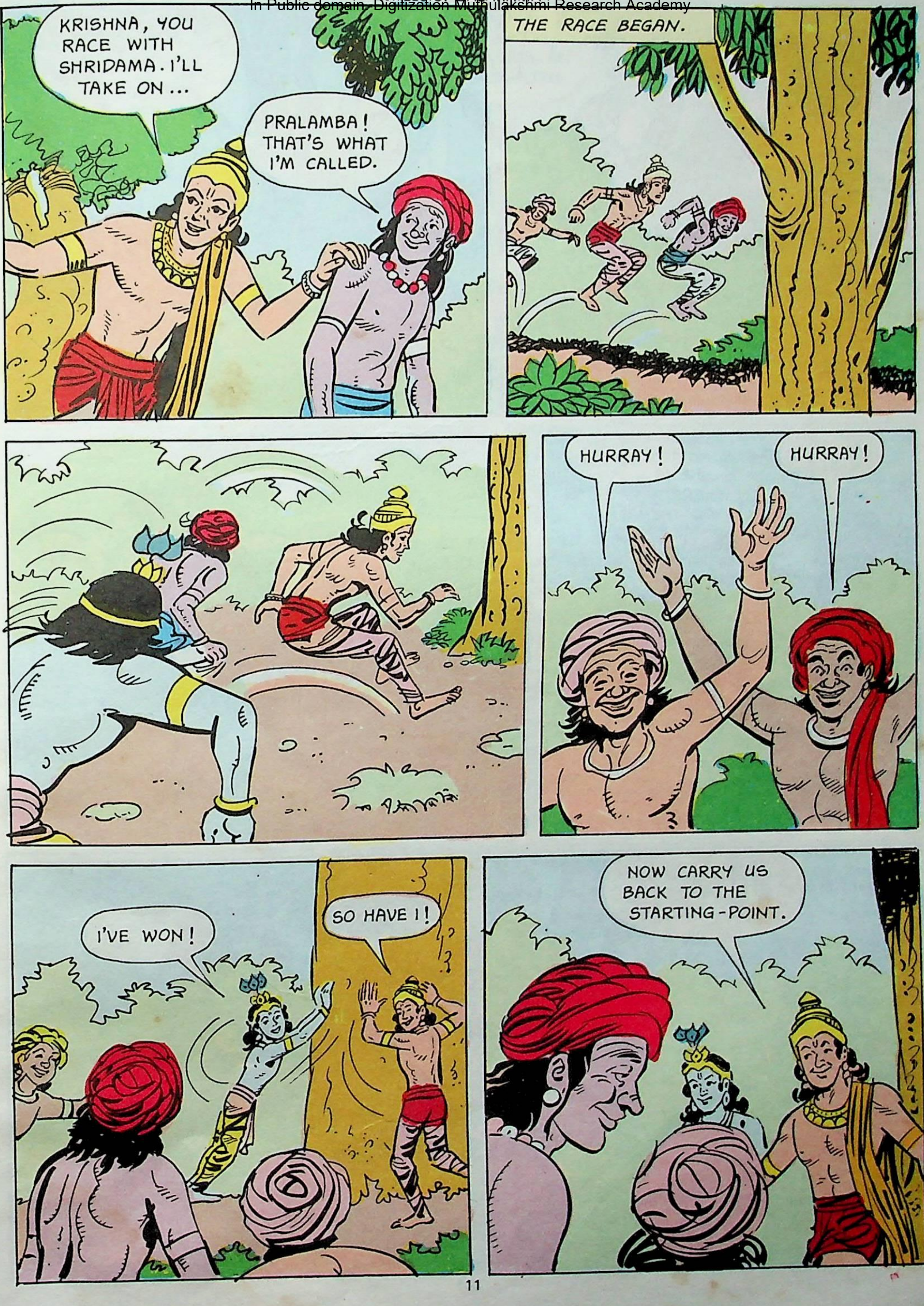

ANY MORE OF THEM ?
NONE THAT I CAN SEE.

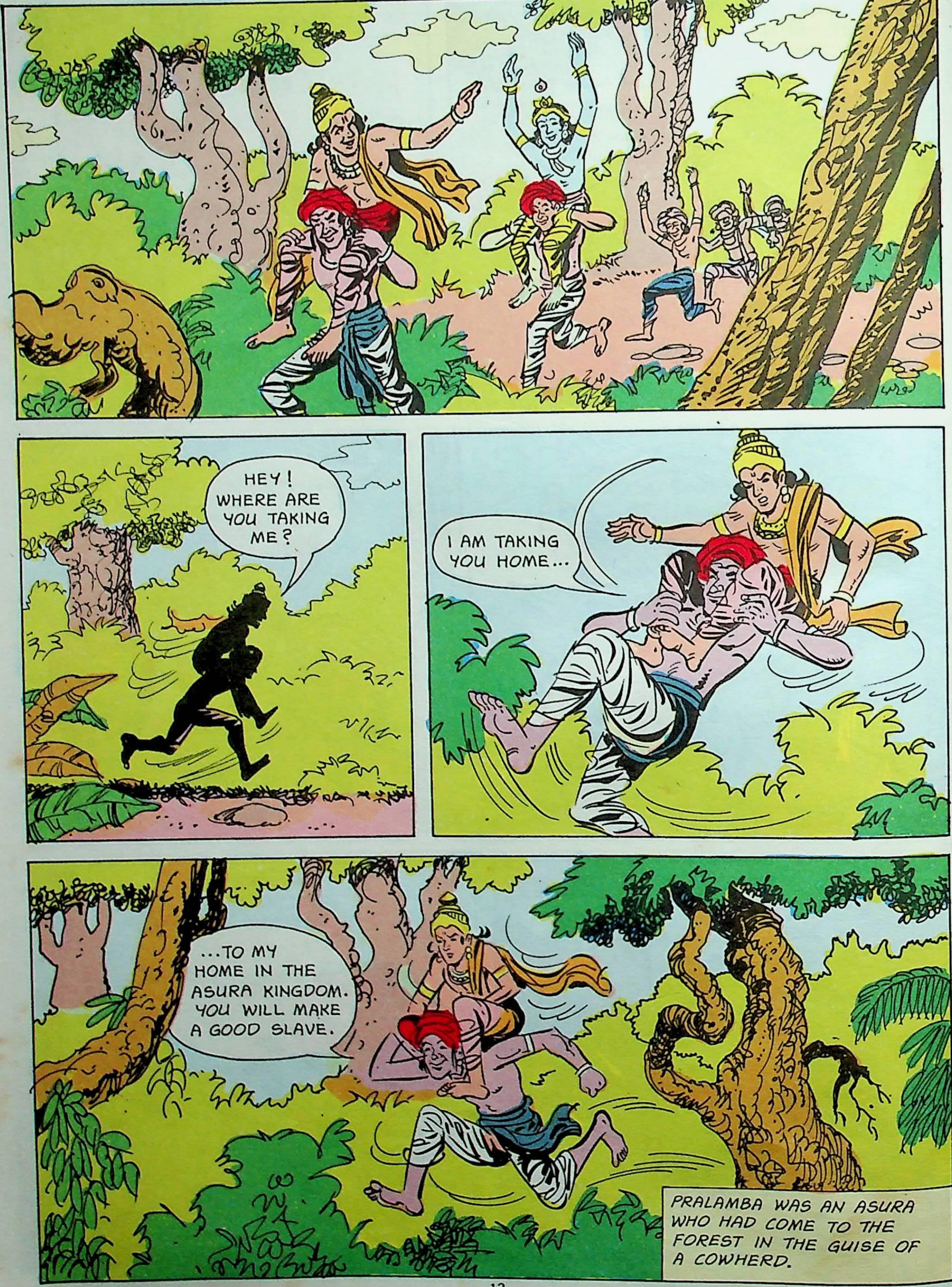

GOOD! NOW WE CAN EAT AS MANY BERRIES AS WE WANT.

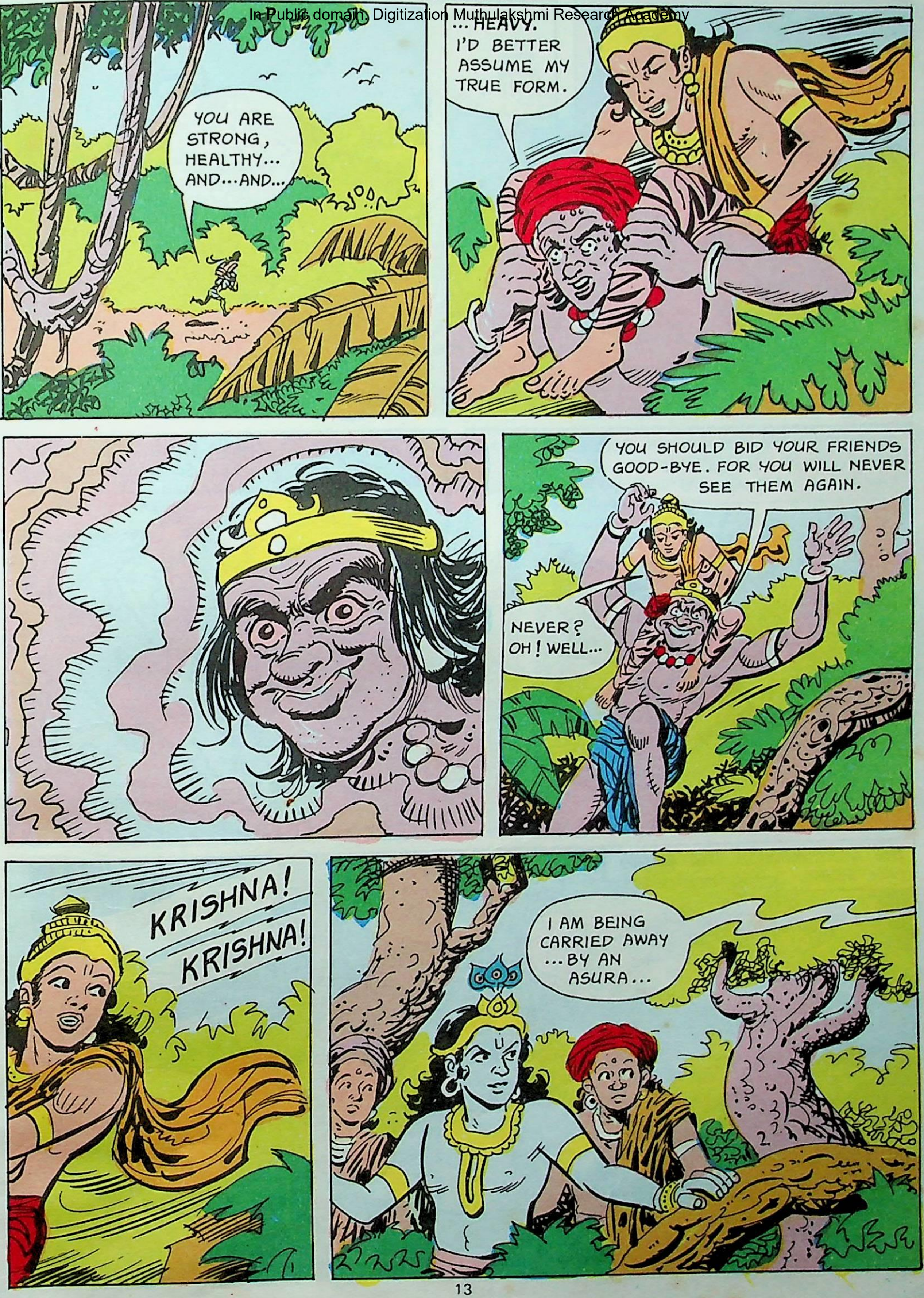

AND OUR CATTLE TOO ARE SAFE, RAMA.

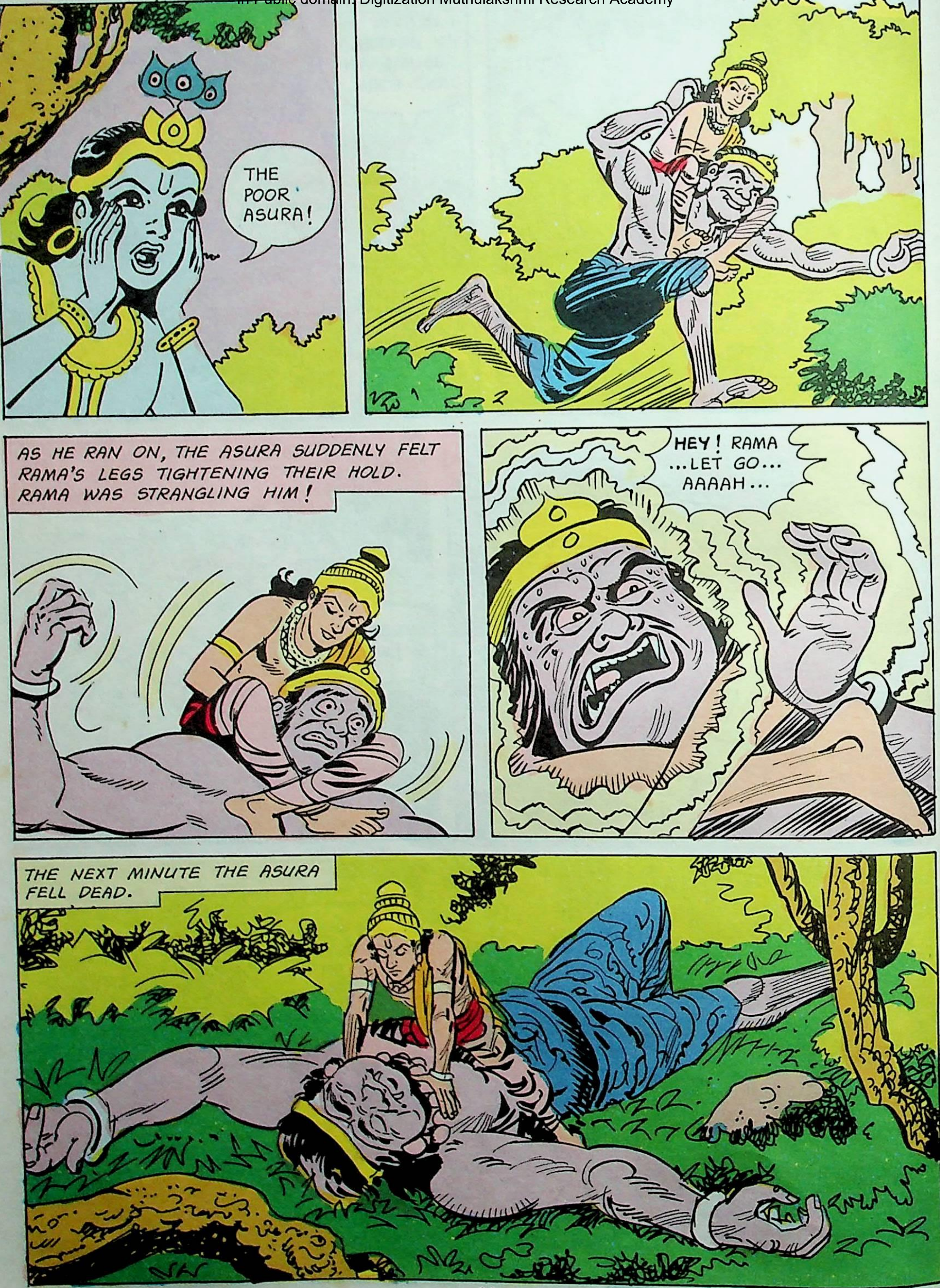

THUS DID RAMA SECURE NEW TERRITORY WITH LUSH GREEN GRASS FOR THE CATTLE OF THE VILLAGE TO GRAZE ON.

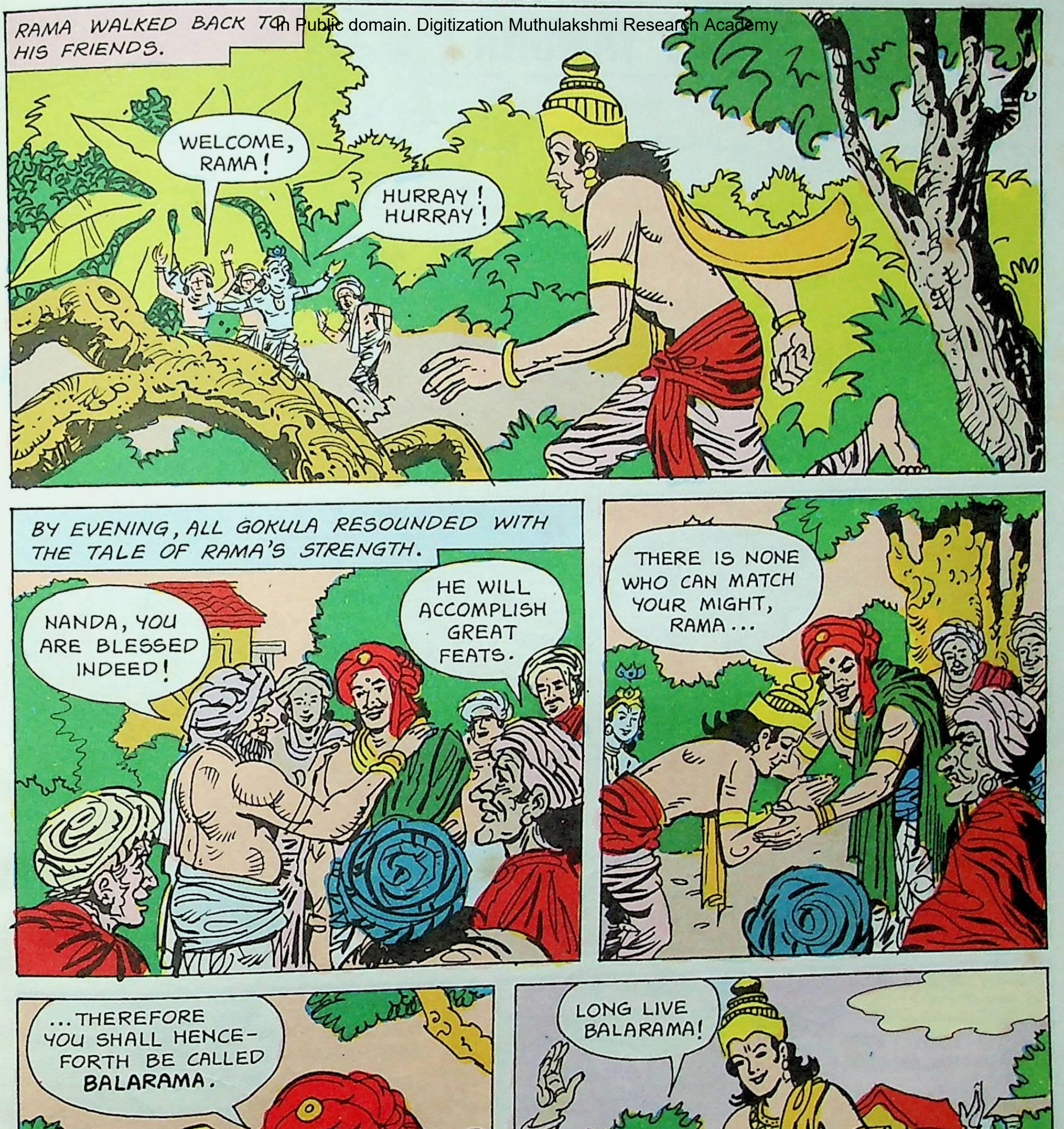

AS THE CATTLE GRAZED, THE COWHERDS WRESTLED AND PLAYED GAMES TO WHILE THEIR TIME AWAY.
ONE DAY A STRANGER CAME UP TO THEM.
MAY I JOIN YOU, FRIENDS?
ONLY IF YOU CAN TEACH US A NEW GAME.
HAVE YOU EVER RUN A RACE IN PAIRS, JUMPING WITH BOTH FEET AT ONCE LIKE DEER?
NO. BUT IT SHOULD BE FUN.
WHAT DOES THE WINNER GET?
A JOY RIDE.
THE LOSER WILL HAVE TO CARRY HIM BACK TO THE STARTING-POINT.
LET'S BEGIN. NOW!


KRISHNA, YOU RACE WITH SHRIDAMA. I'LL TAKE ON...
PRALAMBA! THAT'S WHAT I'M CALLED.
THE RACE BEGAN.
HURRAY!
HURRAY!
I'VE WON!
SO HAVE I!
NOW CARRY US BACK TO THE STARTING-POINT.

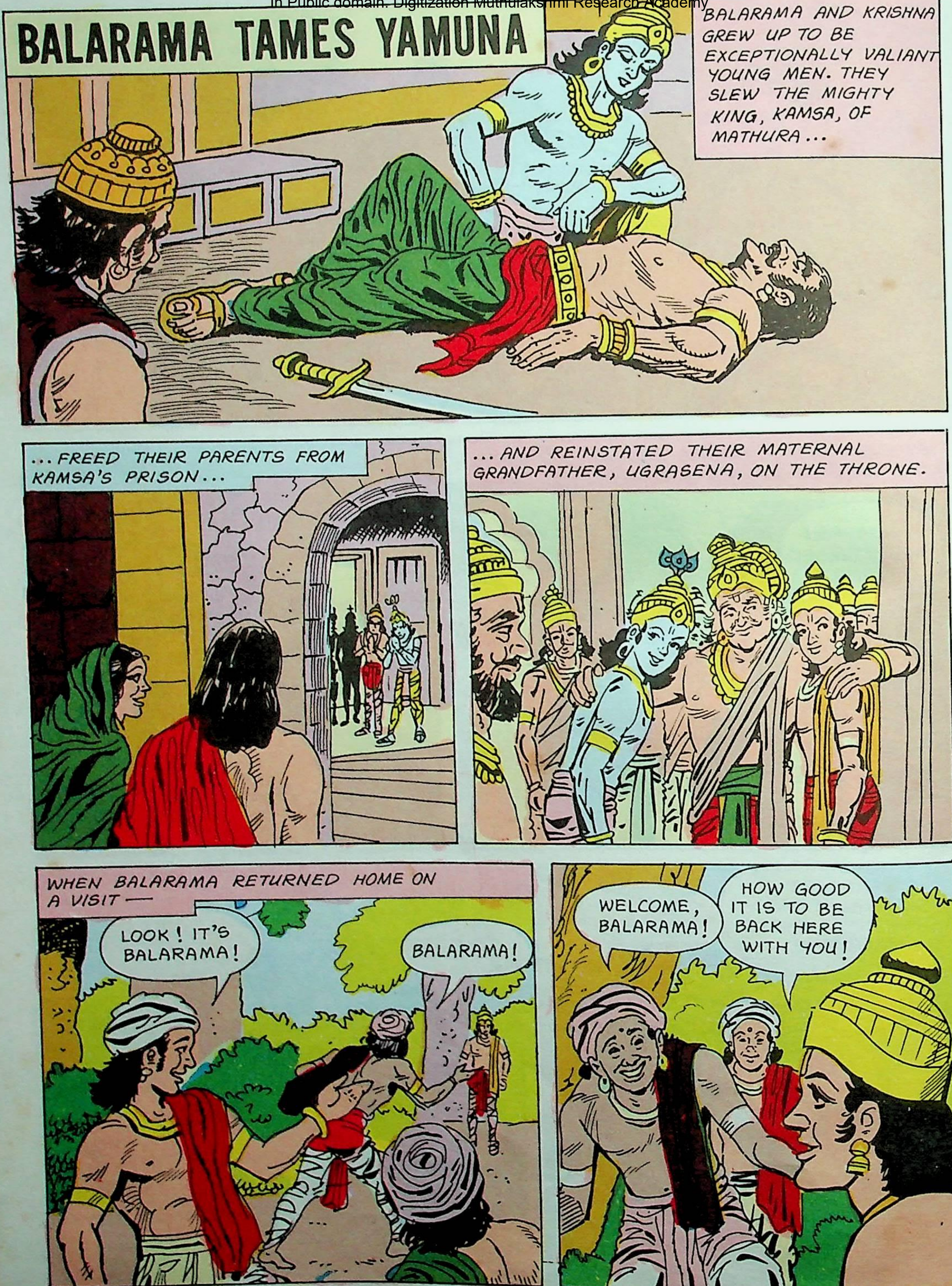

HEY! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
I AM TAKING YOU HOME...
...TO MY HOME IN THE ASURA KINGDOM. YOU WILL MAKE A GOOD SLAVE.
PRALAMBA WAS AN ASURA WHO HAD COME TO THE FOREST IN THE GUISE OF A COWHERD.

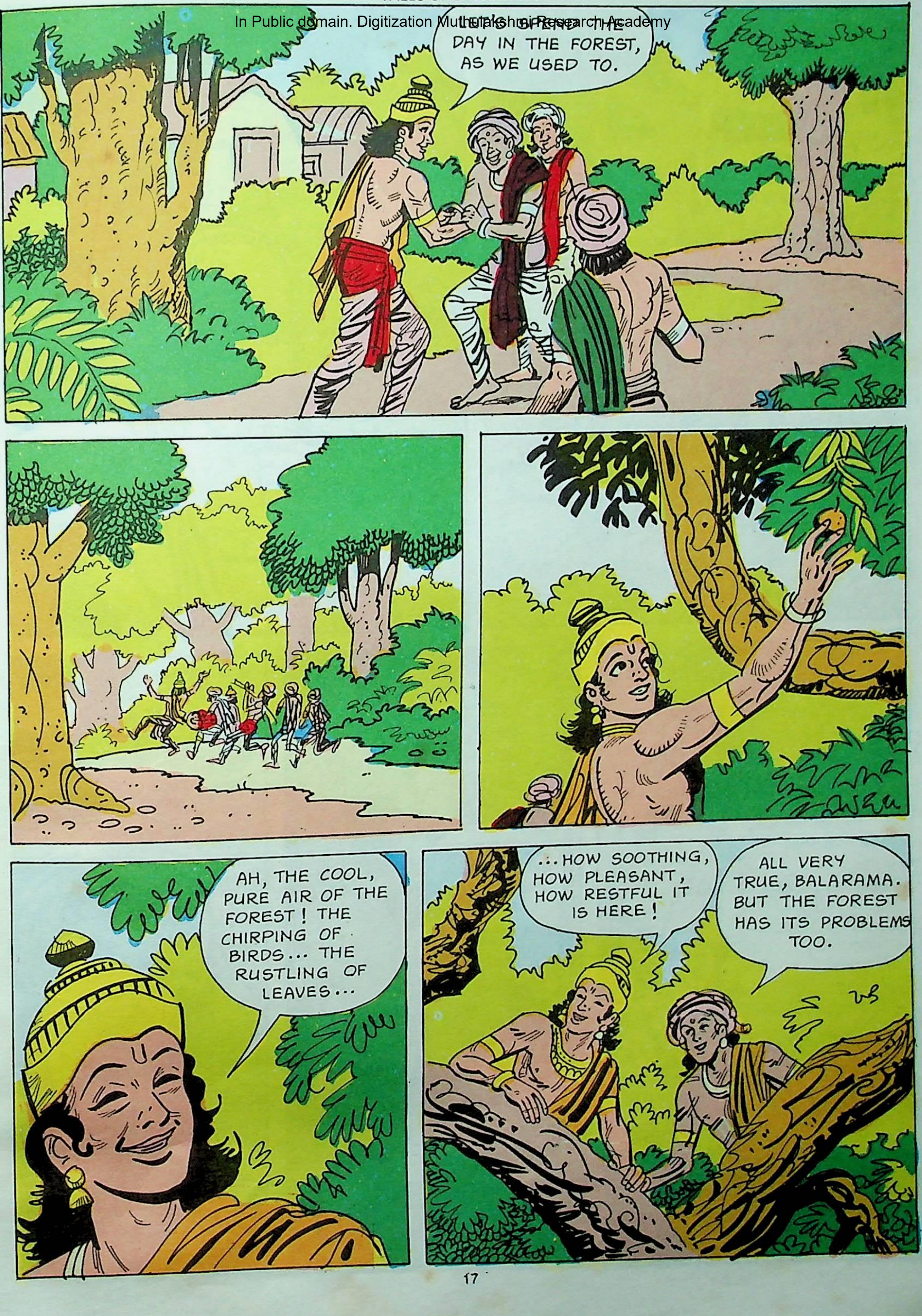

YOU ARE STRONG, HEALTHY... AND...AND...
...HEAVY. I'D BETTER ASSUME MY TRUE FORM.
YOU SHOULD BID YOUR FRIENDS GOOD-BYE. FOR YOU WILL NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN.
NEVER? OH! WELL...
KRISHNA! KRISHNA!
I AM BEING CARRIED AWAY ...BY AN ASURA...

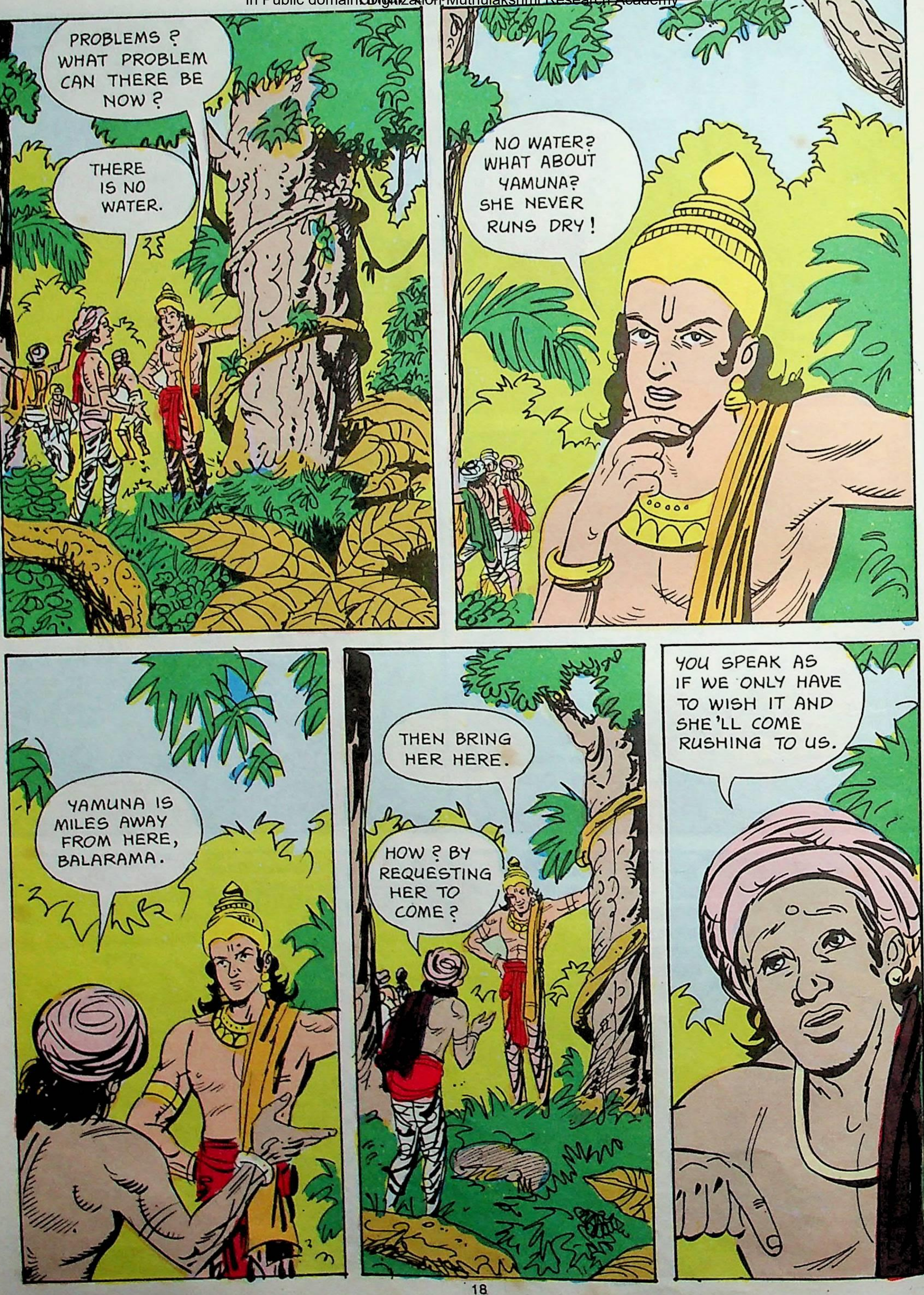

THE POOR ASURA!
AS HE RAN ON, THE ASURA SUDDENLY FELT RAMA'S LEGS TIGHTENING THEIR HOLD. RAMA WAS STRANGLING HIM!
HEY! RAMA ...LET GO... AAAAH...
THE NEXT MINUTE THE ASURA FELL DEAD.

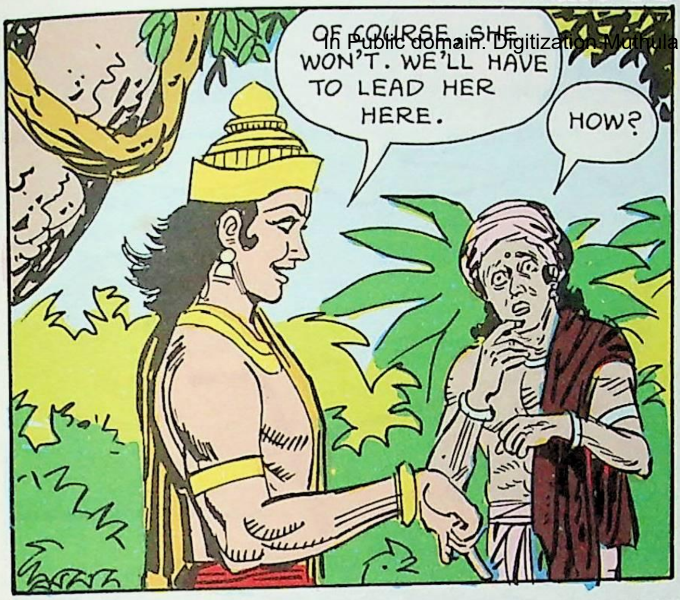

RAMA WALKED BACK TO HIS FRIENDS.
WELCOME, RAMA!
HURRAY! HURRAY!
BY EVENING, ALL GOKULA RESOUNDED WITH THE TALE OF RAMA'S STRENGTH.
NANDA, YOU ARE BLESSED INDEED!
HE WILL ACCOMPLISH GREAT FEATS.
THERE IS NONE WHO CAN MATCH YOUR MIGHT, RAMA...
...THEREFORE YOU SHALL HENCEFORTH BE CALLED BALARAMA.
LONG LIVE BALARAMA!
THE TITLE CONFERRED BY HIS FOSTER-FATHER, NANDA, STUCK. RAMA CAME TO BE CALLED BALARAMA.

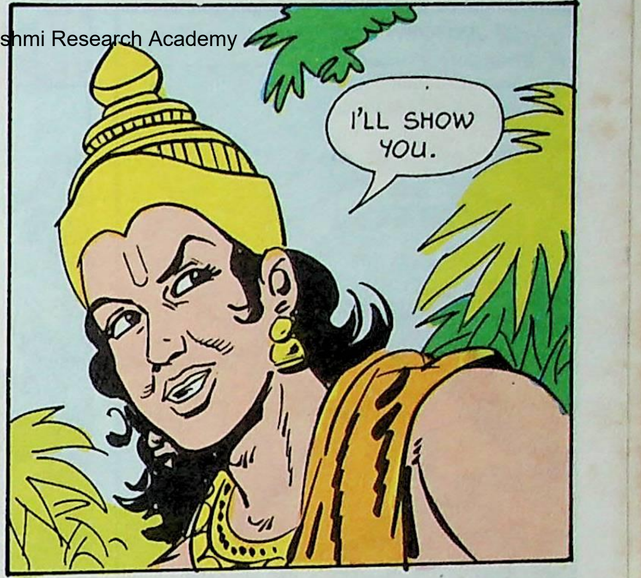
BALARAMA TAMES YAMUNA

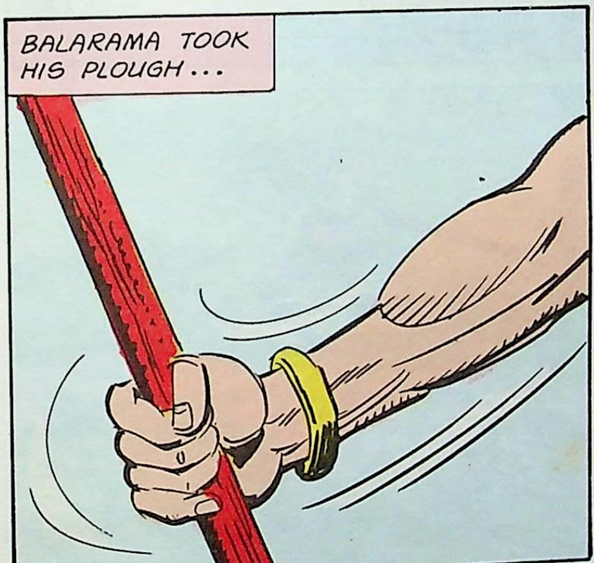

BALARAMA AND KRISHNA GREW UP TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY VALIANT YOUNG MEN. THEY SLEW THE MIGHTY KING, KAMSA, OF MATHURA...
...FREED THEIR PARENTS FROM KAMSA'S PRISON...
...AND REINSTATED THEIR MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, UGRASENA, ON THE THRONE.
WHEN BALARAMA RETURNED HOME ON A VISIT —
LOOK! IT'S BALARAMA!
BALARAMA!
WELCOME, BALARAMA!
HOW GOOD IT IS TO BE BACK HERE WITH YOU!

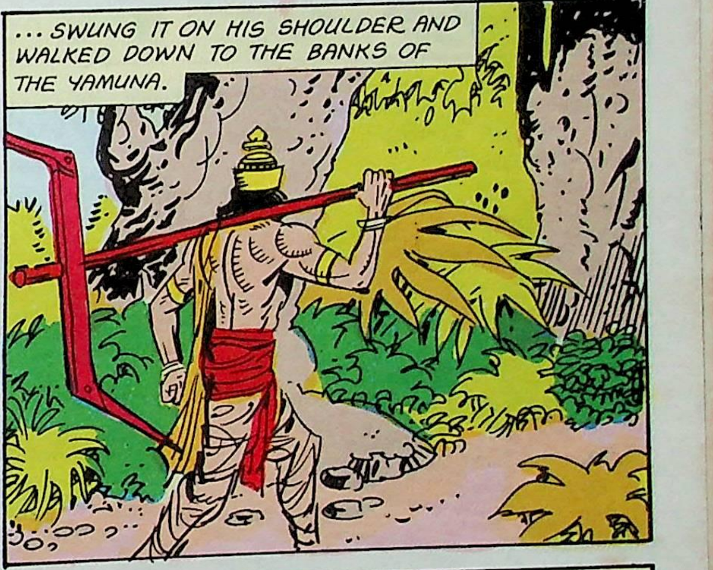

LET'S SPEND THE DAY IN THE FOREST, AS WE USED TO.
AH, THE COOL, PURE AIR OF THE FOREST! THE CHIRPING OF BIRDS... THE RUSTLING OF LEAVES...
...HOW SOOTHING, HOW PLEASANT, HOW RESTFUL IT IS HERE!
ALL VERY TRUE, BALARAMA. BUT THE FOREST HAS ITS PROBLEMS TOO.

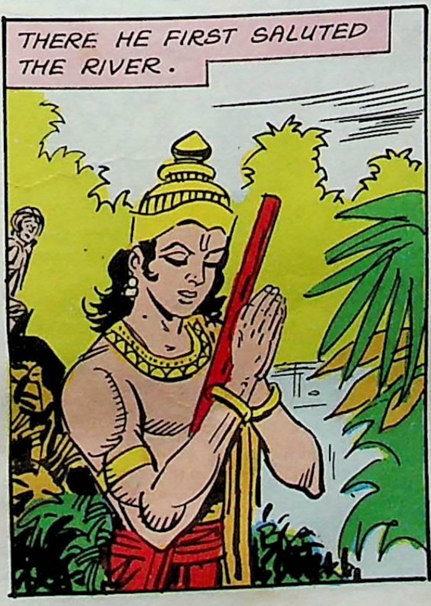

PROBLEMS ? WHAT PROBLEM CAN THERE BE NOW ?
THERE IS NO WATER.
NO WATER? WHAT ABOUT YAMUNA? SHE NEVER RUNS DRY !
YAMUNA IS MILES AWAY FROM HERE, BALARAMA.
THEN BRING HER HERE.
HOW ? BY REQUESTING HER TO COME ?
YOU SPEAK AS IF WE ONLY HAVE TO WISH IT AND SHE'LL COME RUSHING TO US.

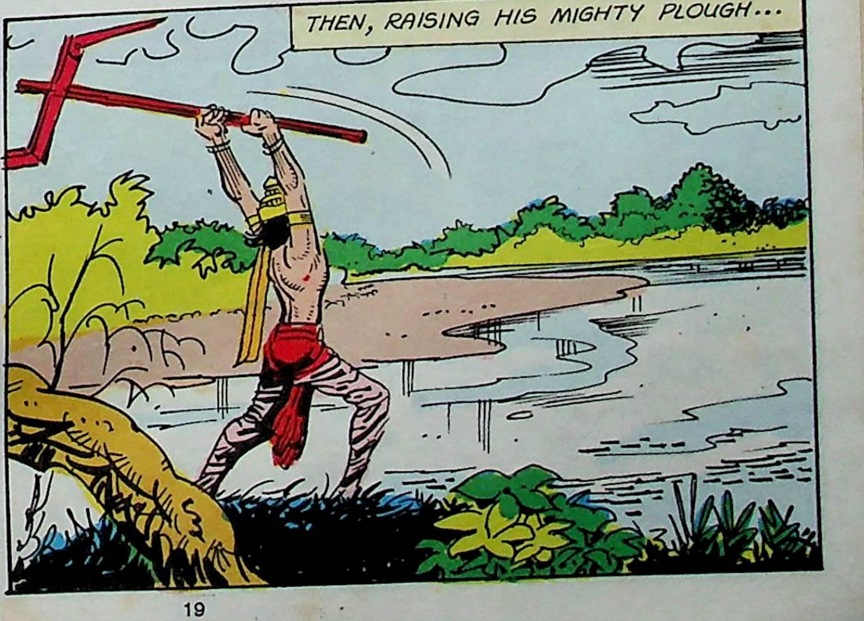

OF COURSE, SHE WON'T. WE'LL HAVE TO LEAD HER HERE.
HOW?

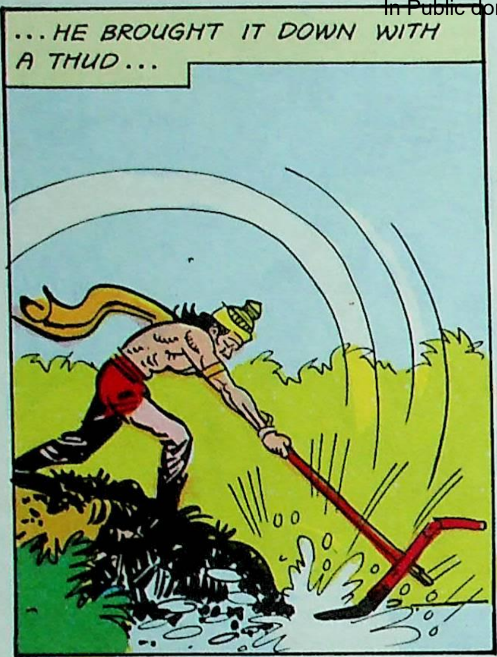

I'LL SHOW YOU.


BALARAMA TOOK HIS PLOUGH ...

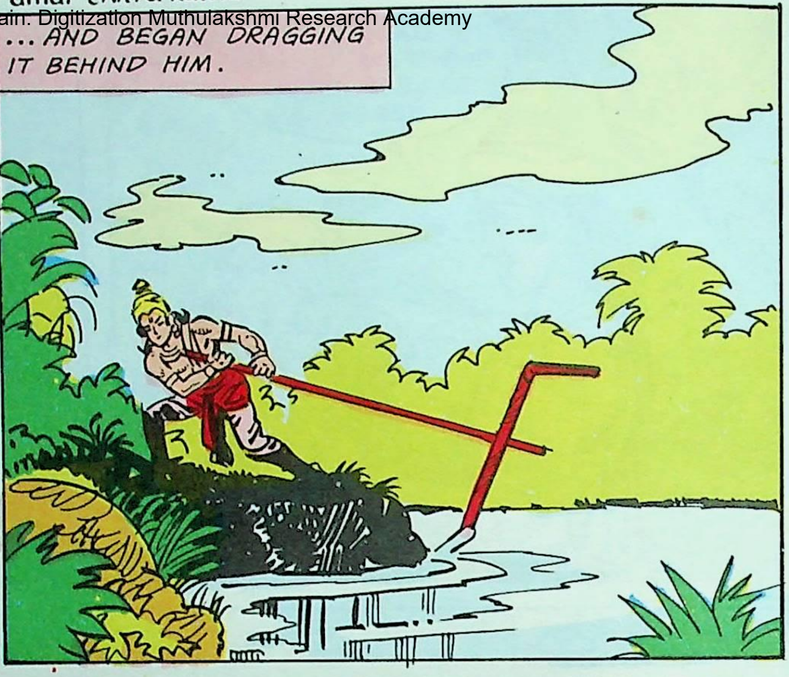

... SWUNG IT ON HIS SHOULDER AND WALKED DOWN TO THE BANKS OF THE YAMUNA.


THERE HE FIRST SALUTED THE RIVER.

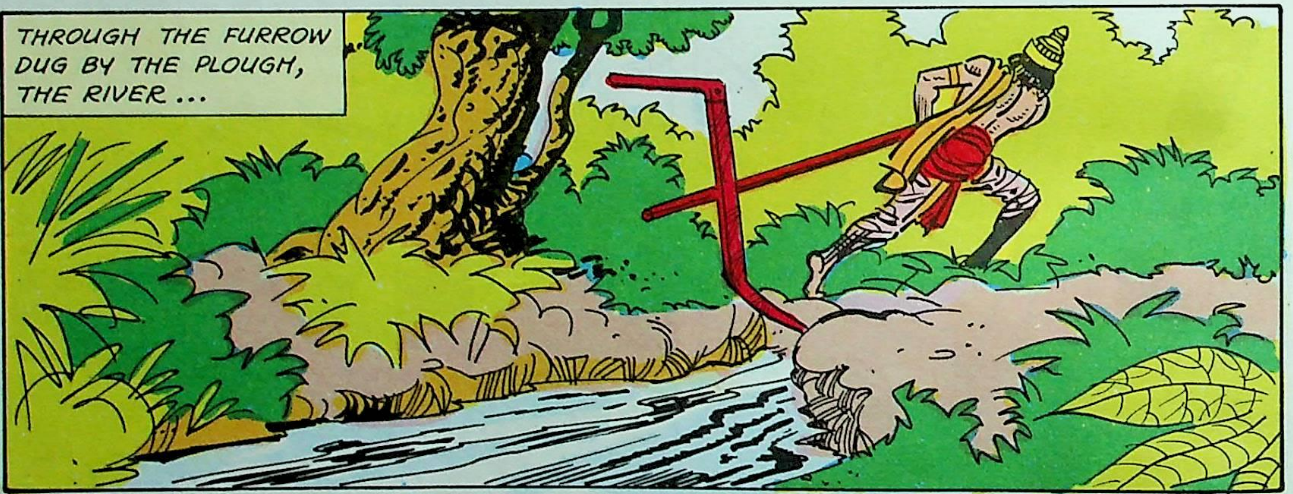

THEN, RAISING HIS MIGHTY PLOUGH ...



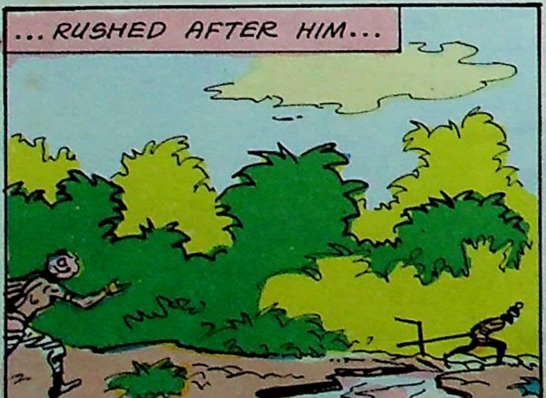
... HE BROUGHT IT DOWN WITH A THUD ...



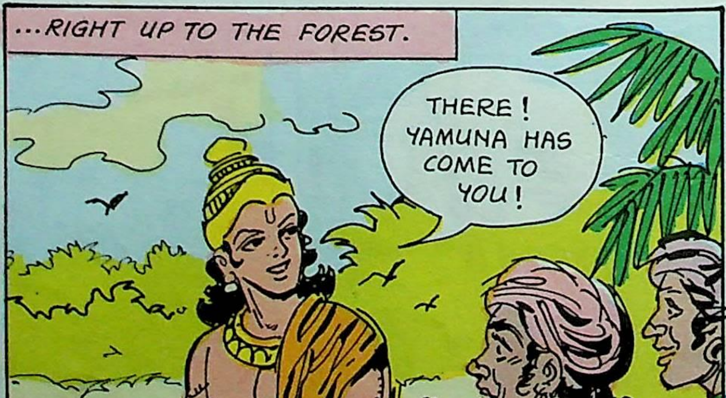
... AND BEGAN DRAGGING IT BEHIND HIM.



THROUGH THE FURROW DUG BY THE PLOUGH, THE RIVER ...



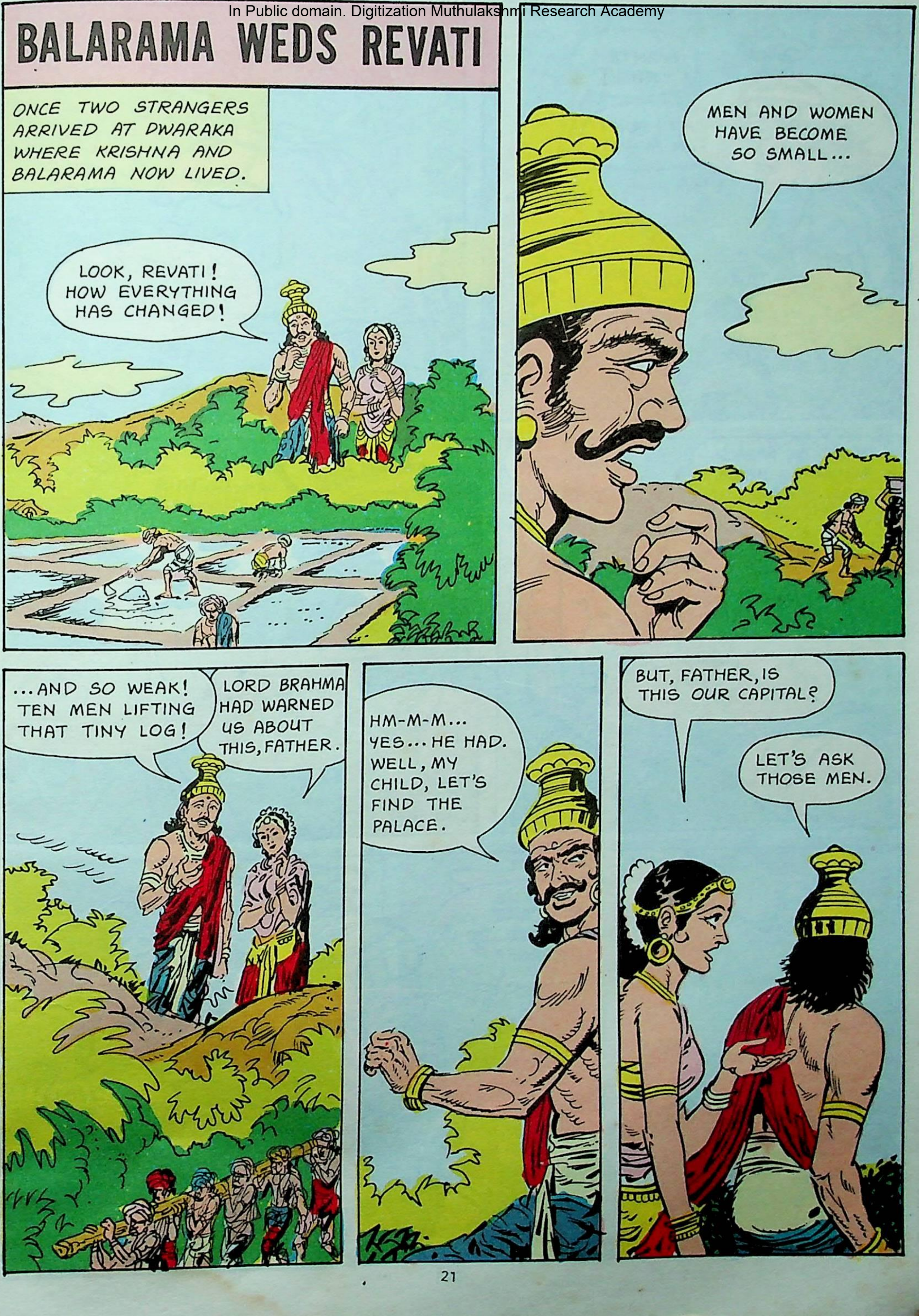
... RUSHED AFTER HIM ...

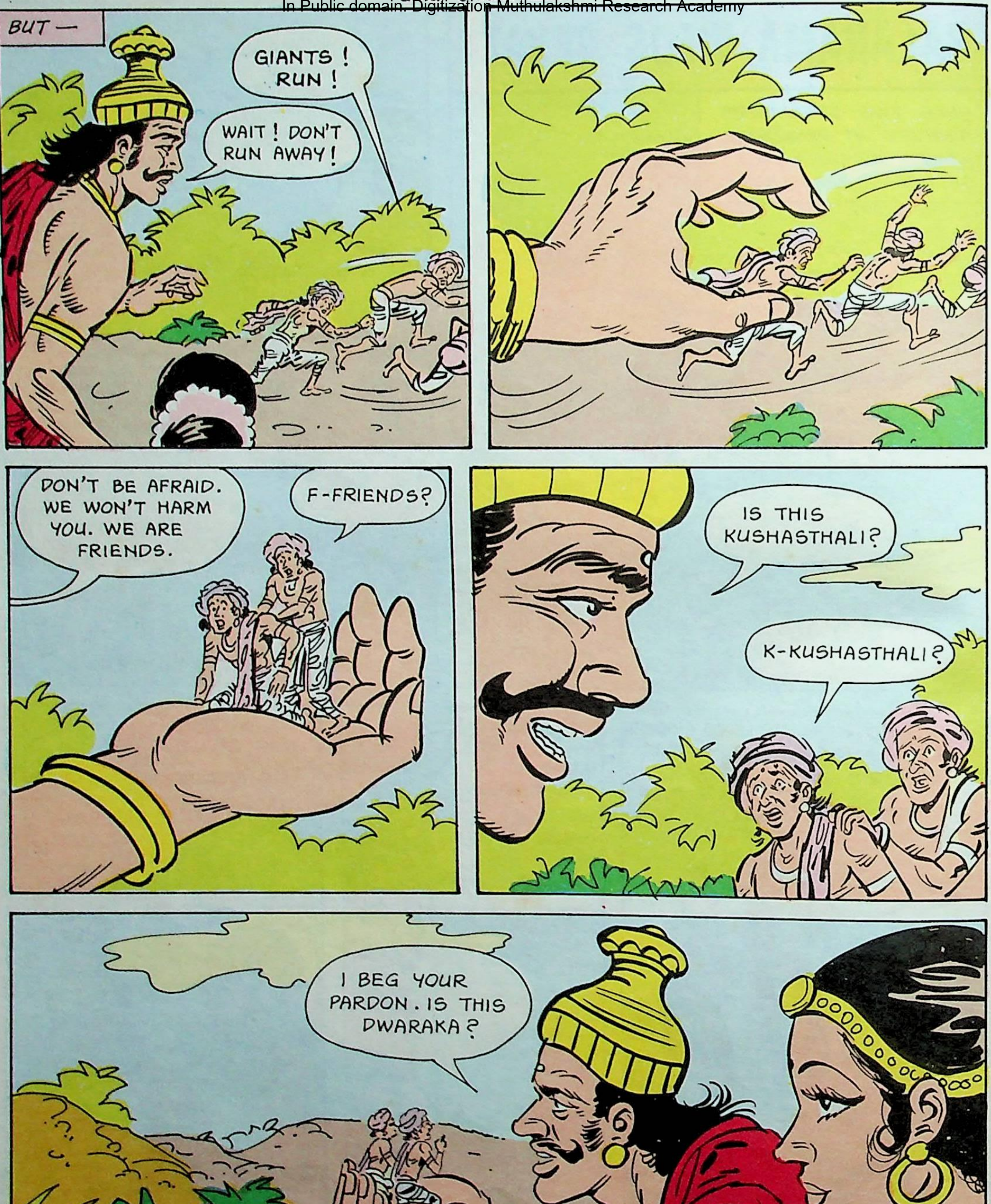


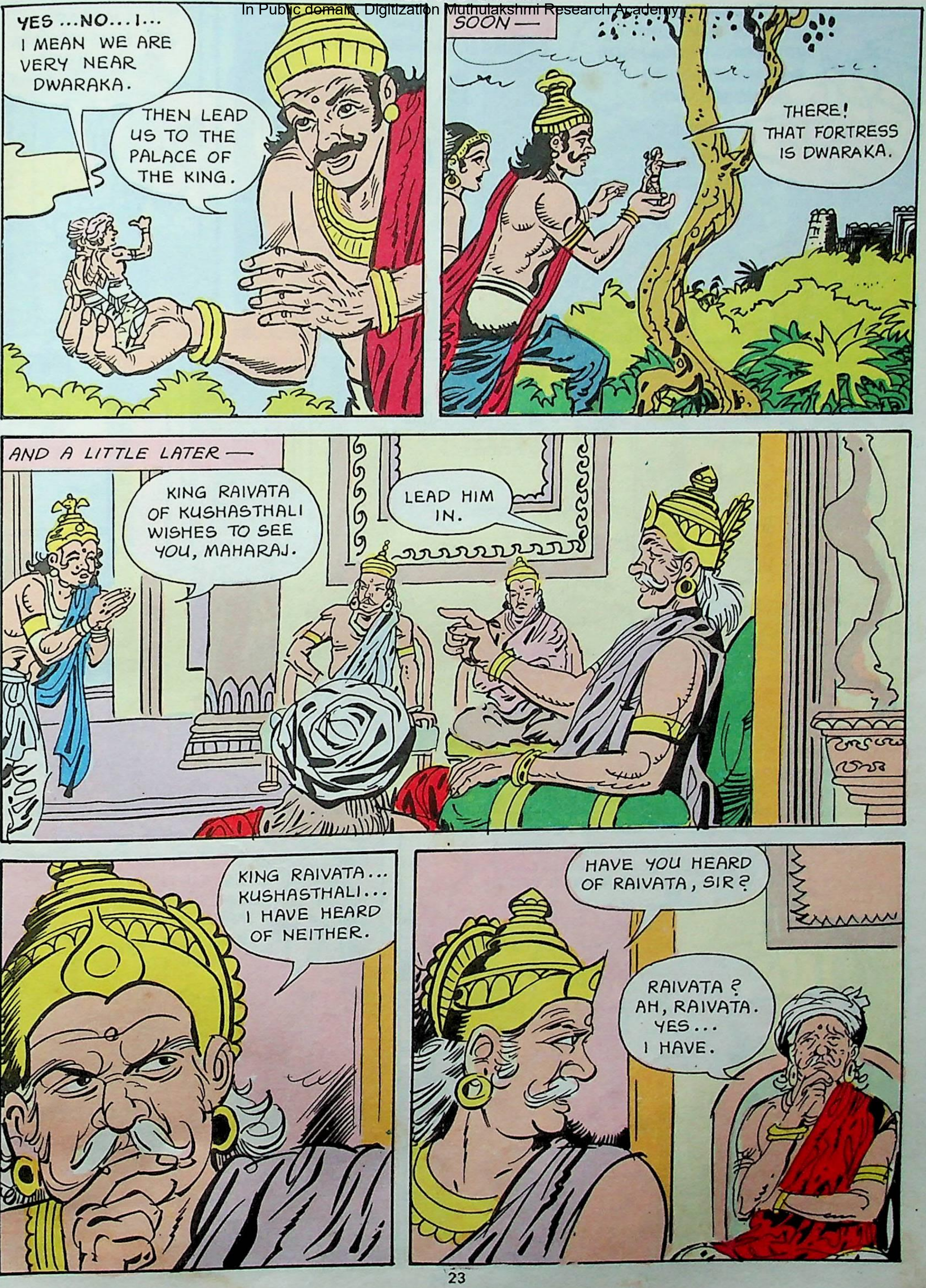
... RIGHT UP TO THE FOREST.

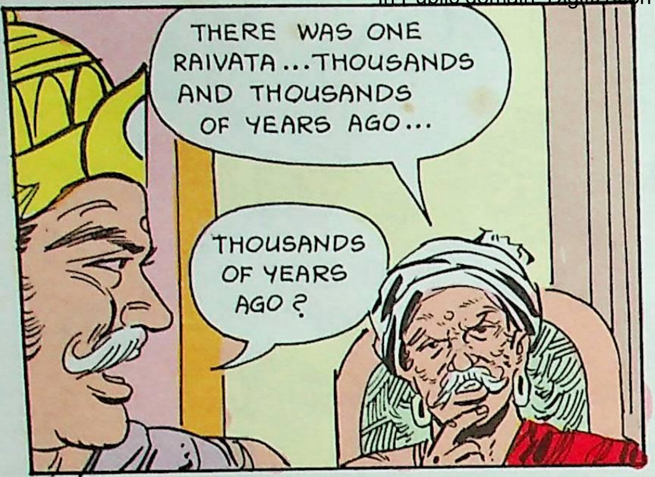
THERE ! YAMUNA HAS COME TO YOU !

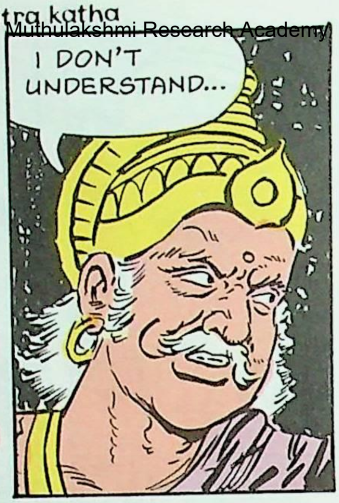
BALARAMA WEDS REVATI

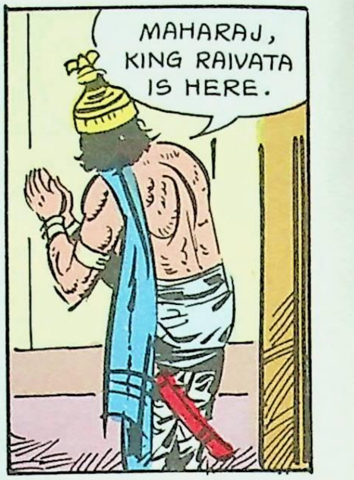

ONCE TWO STRANGERS ARRIVED AT DWARAKA WHERE KRISHNA AND BALARAMA NOW LIVED.
LOOK, REVATI! HOW EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED!
MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BECOME SO SMALL...
...AND SO WEAK! TEN MEN LIFTING THAT TINY LOG!
LORD BRAHMA HAD WARNED US ABOUT THIS, FATHER.
HM-M-M... YES... HE HAD. WELL, MY CHILD, LET'S FIND THE PALACE.
BUT, FATHER, IS THIS OUR CAPITAL?
LET'S ASK THOSE MEN.

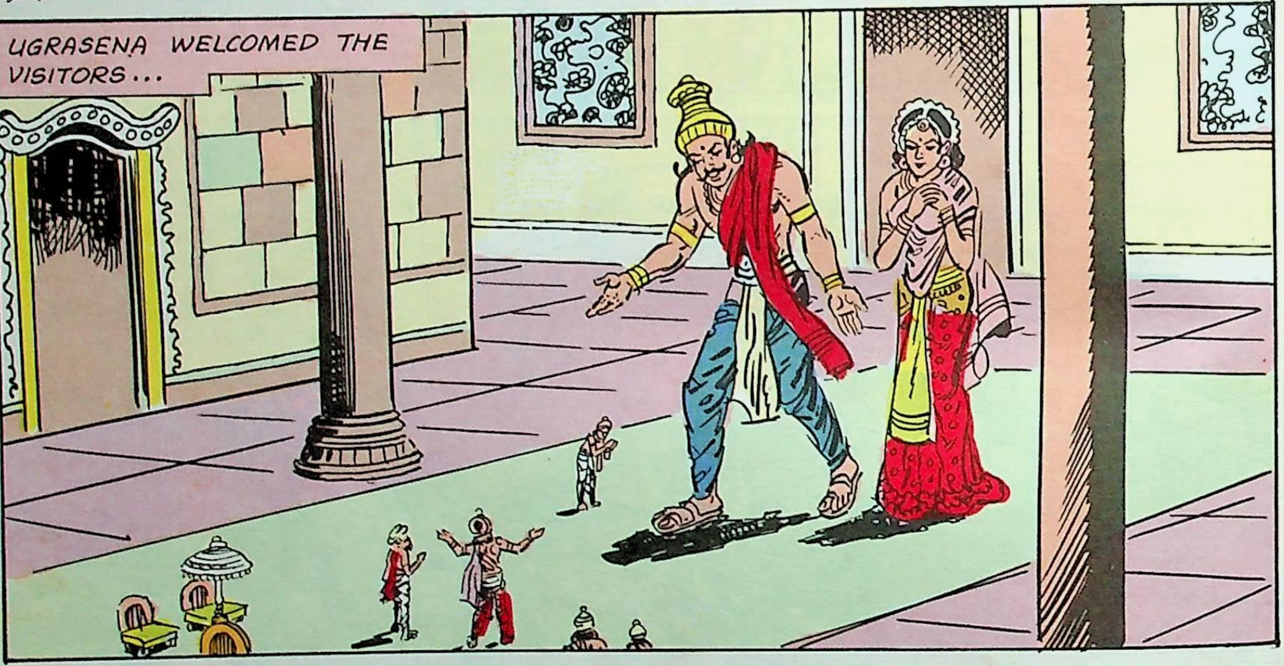

BUT —
GIANTS ! RUN !
WAIT ! DON'T RUN AWAY !
DON'T BE AFRAID. WE WON'T HARM YOU. WE ARE FRIENDS.
F-FRIENDS?
IS THIS KUSHASTHALI?
K-KUSHASTHALI?
I BEG YOUR PARDON. IS THIS DWARAKA?

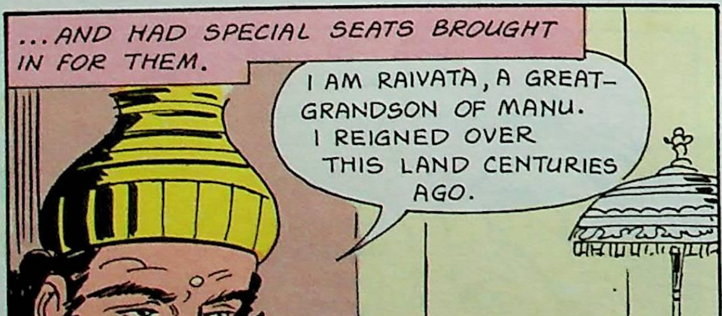

YES ... NO ... I ... I MEAN WE ARE VERY NEAR DWARAKA.
THEN LEAD US TO THE PALACE OF THE KING.
SOON —
THERE! THAT FORTRESS IS DWARAKA.
AND A LITTLE LATER —
KING RAIVATA OF KUSHASTHALI WISHES TO SEE YOU, MAHARAJ.
LEAD HIM IN.
KING RAIVATA... KUSHASTHALI... I HAVE HEARD OF NEITHER.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF RAIVATA, SIR?
RAIVATA? AH, RAIVATA. YES... I HAVE.

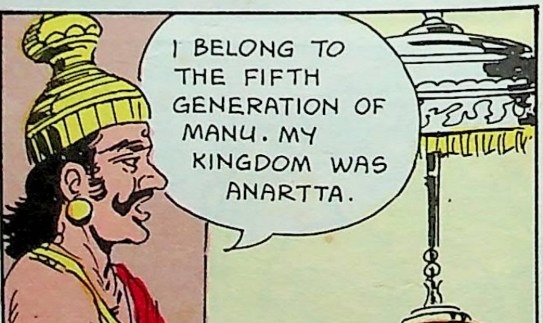

THERE WAS ONE RAIVATA ... THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO ...
THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO ?

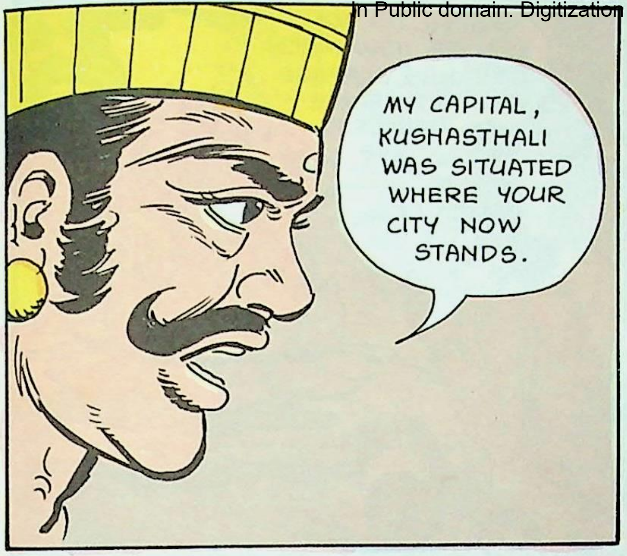

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

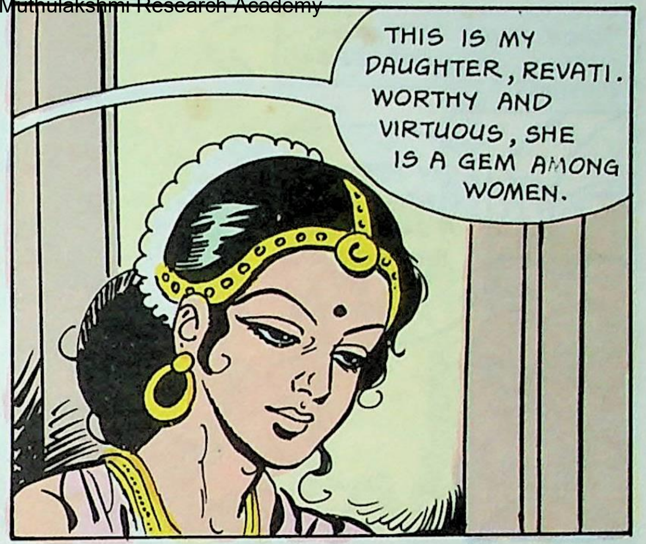

MAHARAJ, KING RAIVATA IS HERE.

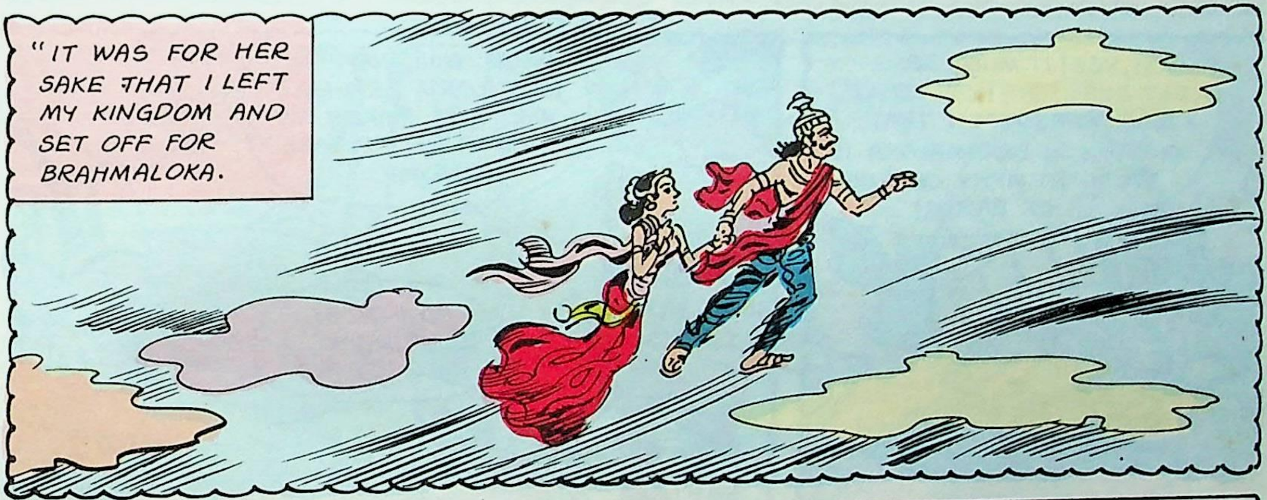

UGRASENA WELCOMED THE VISITORS ...

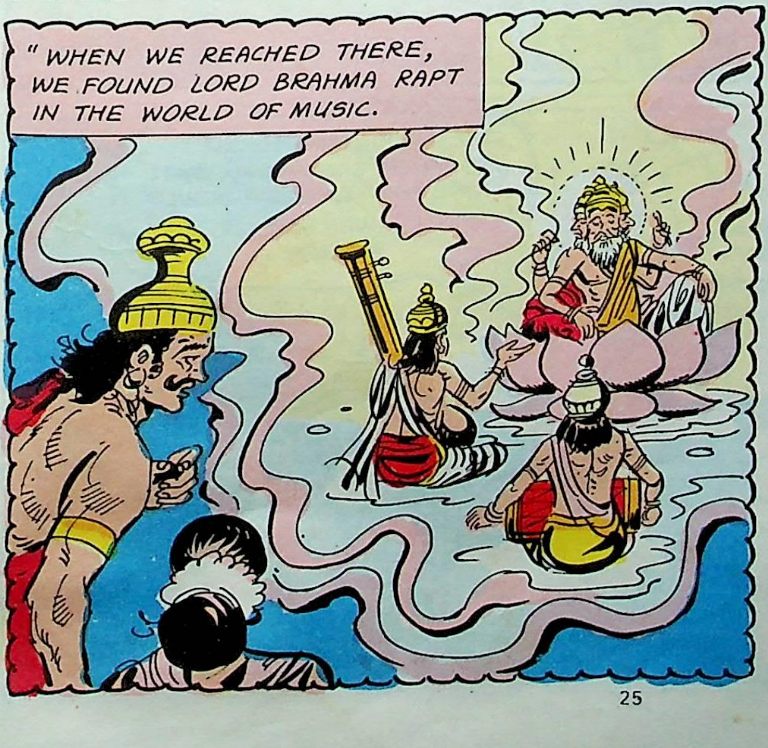

... AND HAD SPECIAL SEATS BROUGHT IN FOR THEM.
I AM RAIVATA, A GREAT-GRANDSON OF MANU. I REIGNED OVER THIS LAND CENTURIES AGO.

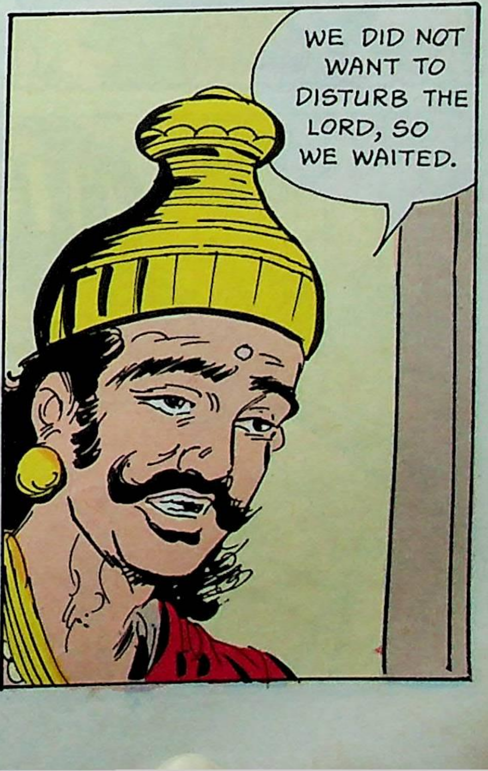

I BELONG TO THE FIFTH GENERATION OF MANU. MY KINGDOM WAS ANARTTA.

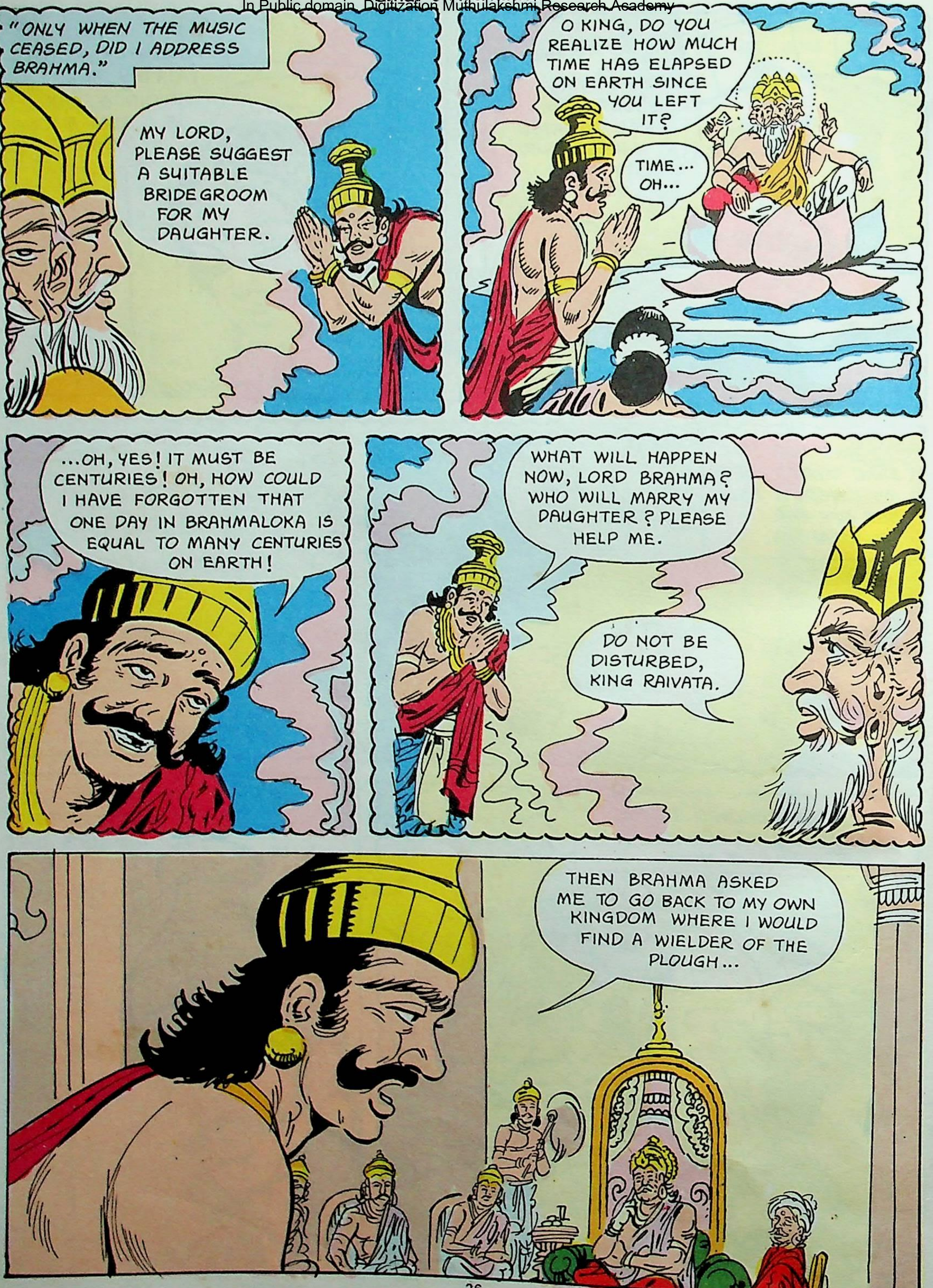

MY CAPITAL, KUSHASTHALI WAS SITUATED WHERE YOUR CITY NOW STANDS.

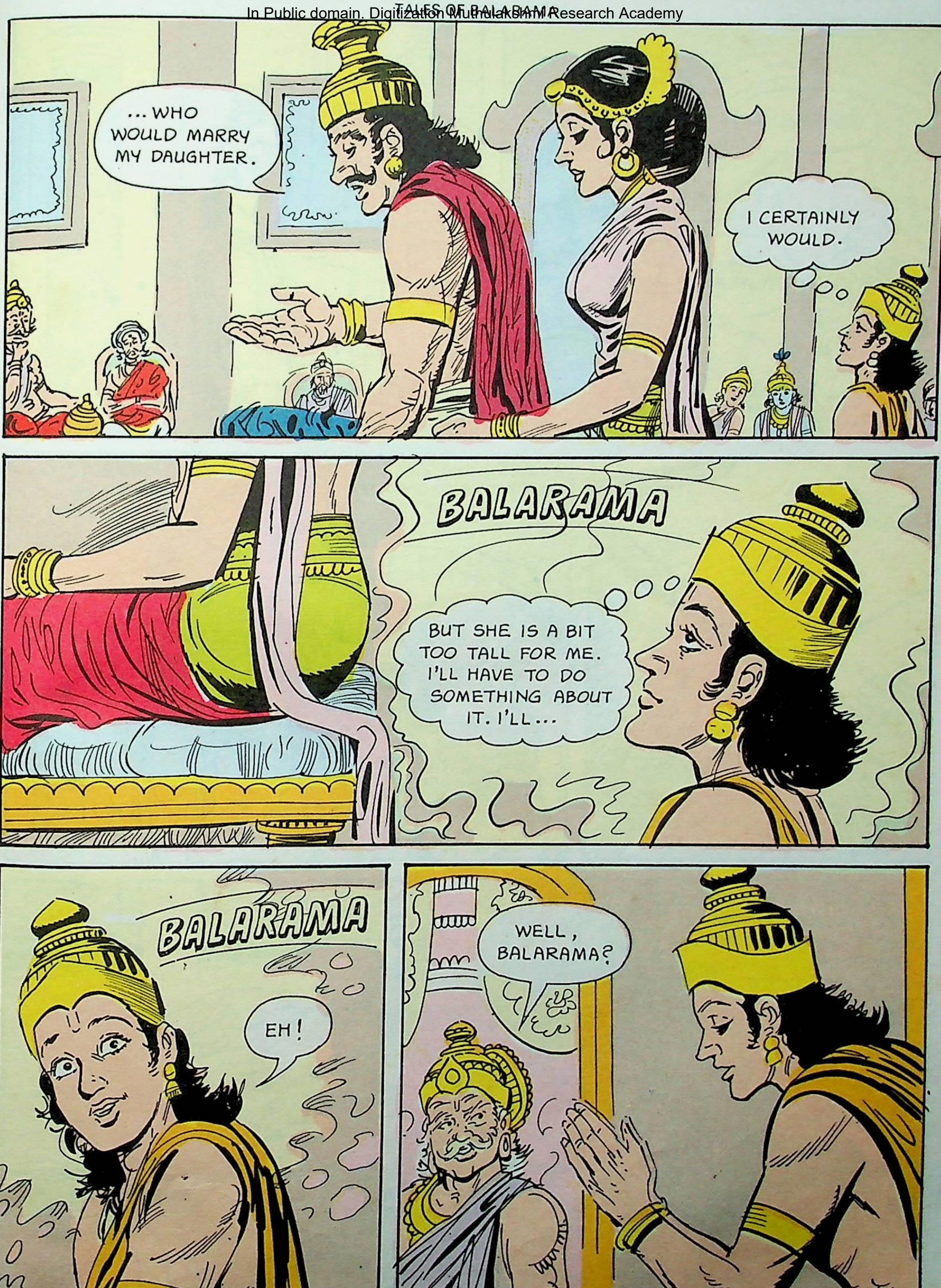

THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, REVATI. WORTHY AND VIRTUOUS, SHE IS A GEM AMONG WOMEN.

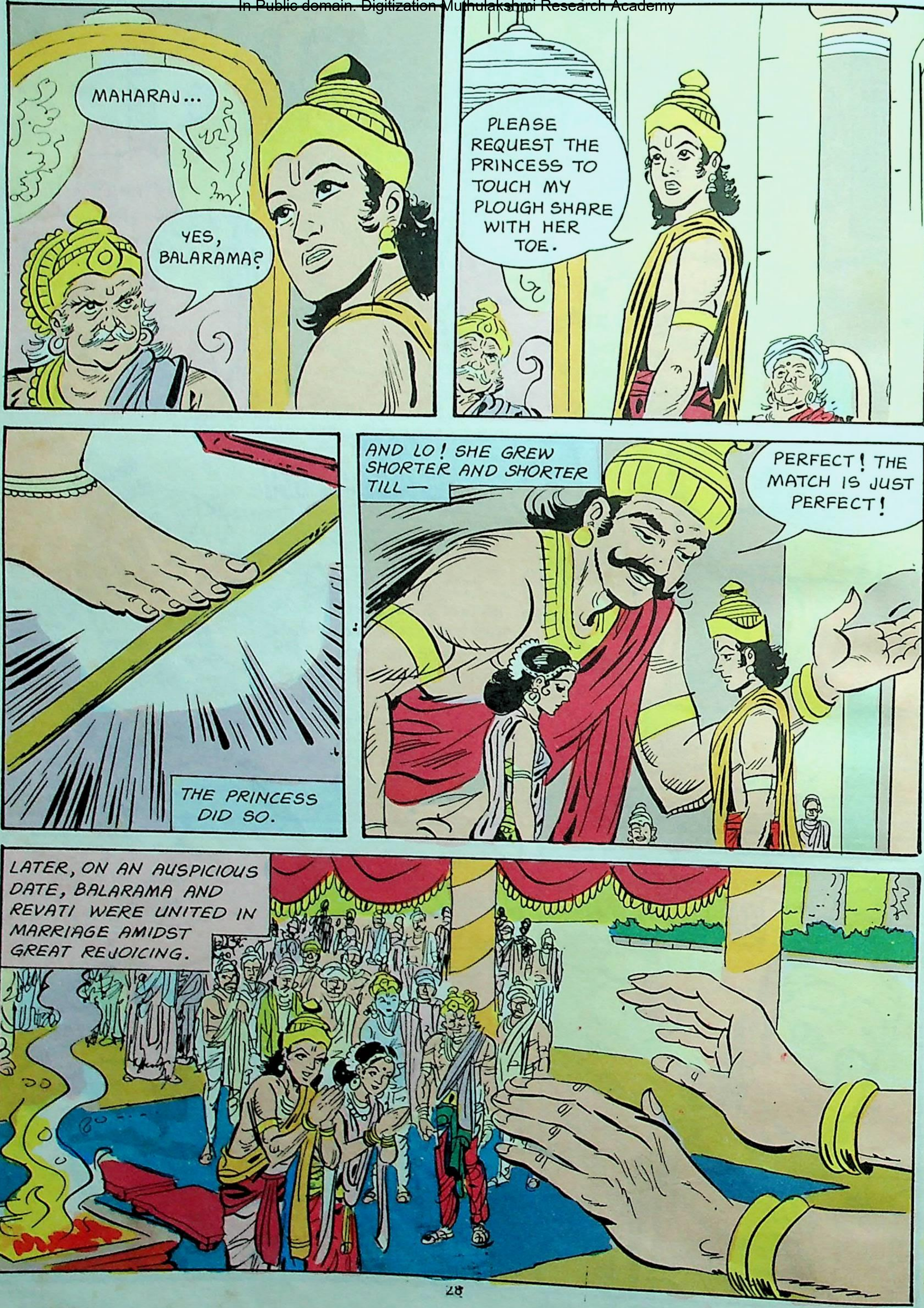

"IT WAS FOR HER SAKE THAT I LEFT MY KINGDOM AND SET OFF FOR BRAHMALOKA.


"WHEN WE REACHED THERE, WE FOUND LORD BRAHMA RAPT IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC.


WE DID NOT WANT TO DISTURB THE LORD, SO WE WAITED.


"ONLY WHEN THE MUSIC CEASED, DID I ADDRESS BRAHMA."
MY LORD, PLEASE SUGGEST A SUITABLE BRIDEGROOM FOR MY DAUGHTER.
O KING, DO YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED ON EARTH SINCE YOU LEFT IT?
TIME... OH...
...OH, YES! IT MUST BE CENTURIES! OH, HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT ONE DAY IN BRAHMALOKA IS EQUAL TO MANY CENTURIES ON EARTH!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW, LORD BRAHMA? WHO WILL MARRY MY DAUGHTER? PLEASE HELP ME.
DO NOT BE DISTURBED, KING RAIVATA.
THEN BRAHMA ASKED ME TO GO BACK TO MY OWN KINGDOM WHERE I WOULD FIND A WIELDER OF THE PLOUGH...

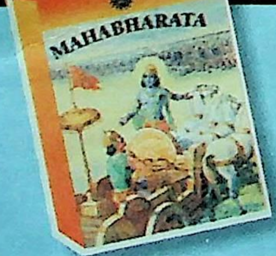

...WHO WOULD MARRY MY DAUGHTER.
I CERTAINLY WOULD.
BALARAMA
BUT SHE IS A BIT TOO TALL FOR ME. I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. I'LL...
BALARAMA
EH!
WELL, BALARAMA?


MAHARAJ...
YES, BALARAMA?
PLEASE REQUEST THE PRINCESS TO TOUCH MY PLOUGH SHARE WITH HER TOE.
THE PRINCESS DID SO.
AND LO! SHE GREW SHORTER AND SHORTER TILL—
PERFECT! THE MATCH IS JUST PERFECT!
LATER, ON AN AUSPICIOUS DATE, BALARAMA AND REVATI WERE UNITED IN MARRIAGE AMIDST GREAT REJOICING.

“**5 brave brothers** fought against their 100 **cousins.**”

The 5 brothers won.

If the **Mahabharata** could be as simple, it wouldn't have been an epic.



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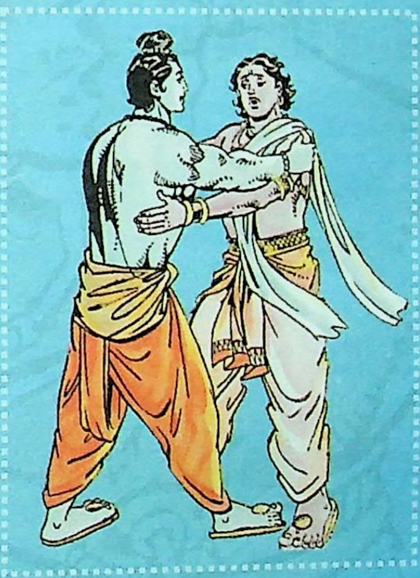
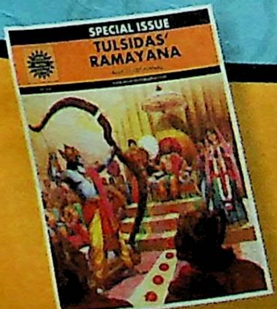
"A Queen was kidnapped."



The King and his army went to her rescue.

If the **Ramayana** could be as simple as that,
it wouldn't have been an epic.



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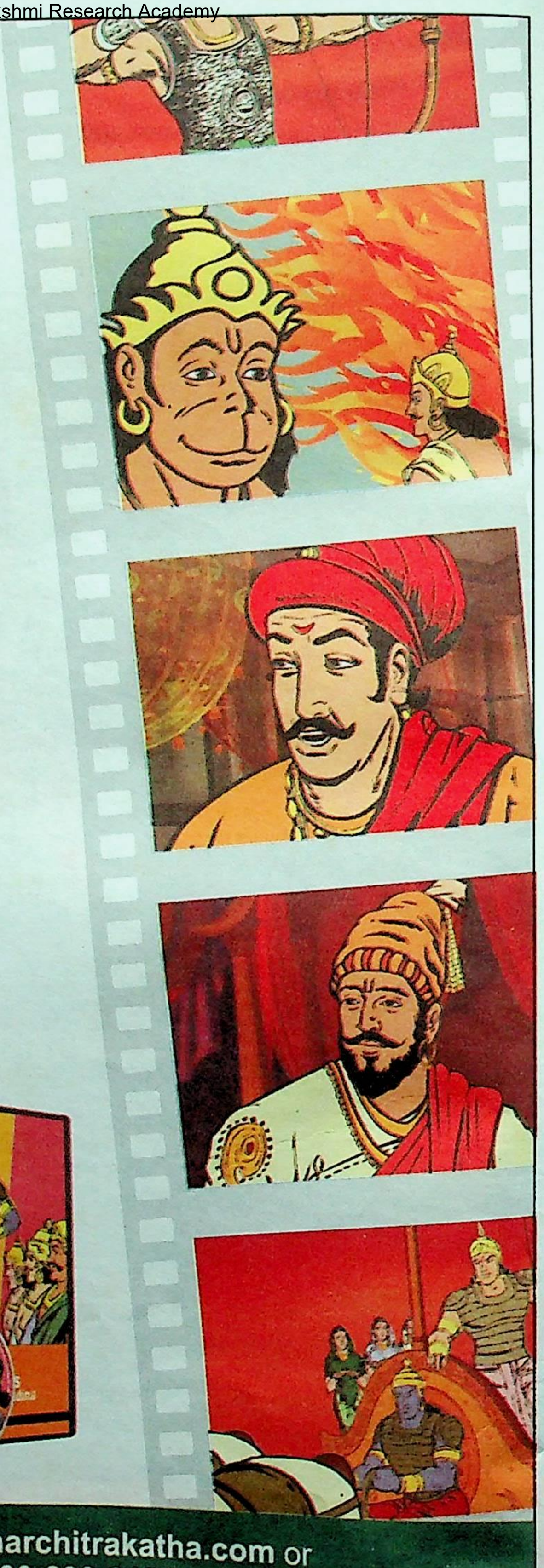

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INDRA AND SHACHI

THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND HIS DEVOTED WIFE

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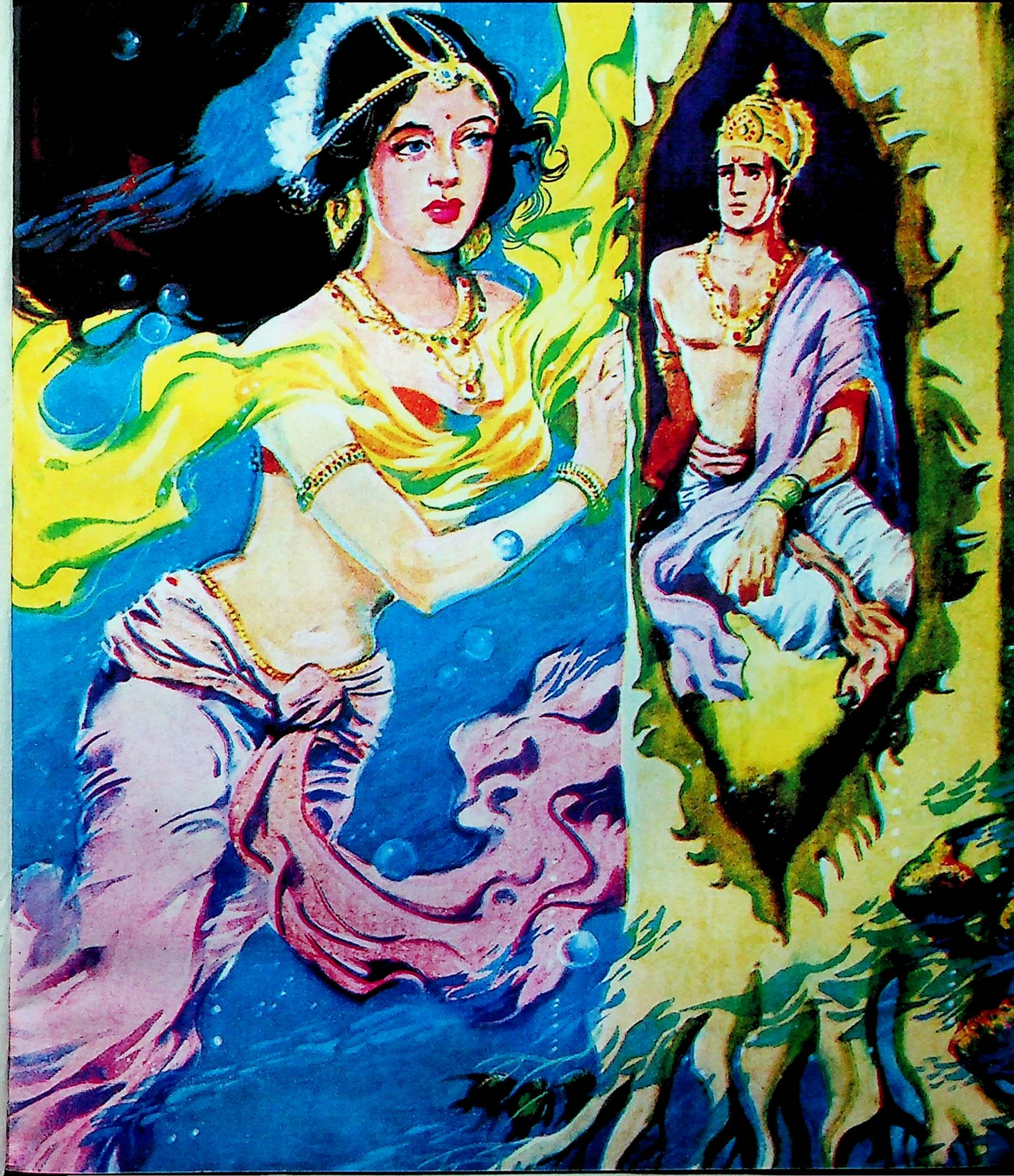

AMAR
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KATHA

The route to your roots

INDRA AND SHACHI

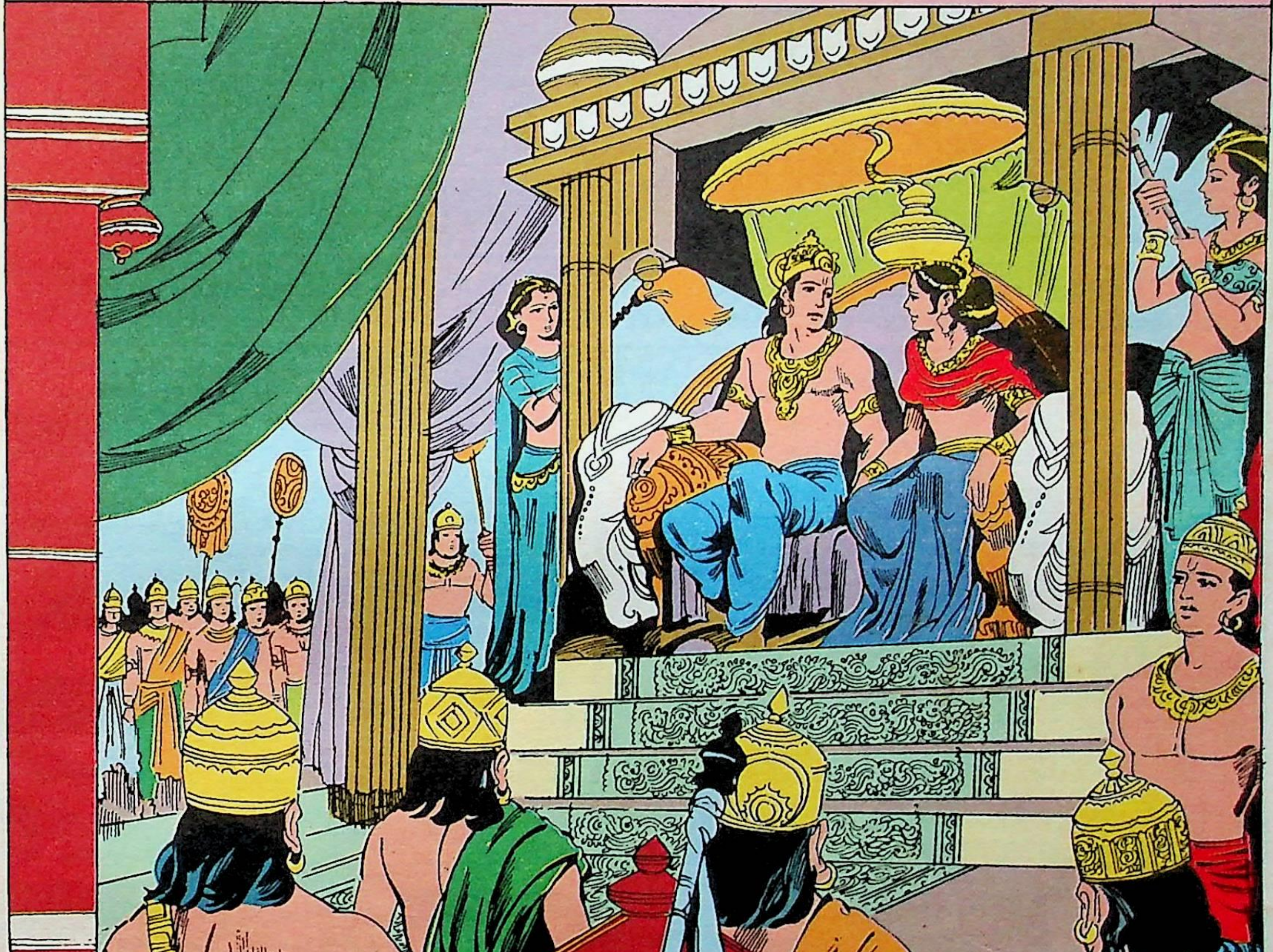
Even gods can be prey to their inner torments. Lying and killing for the sake of peace and order, Indra felt he was unworthy of being king of heaven. A new king was installed on his throne! Now it was up to Indra's wife Shachi to ensure that his honour survived. Would the gods ever regain their respect for her beloved?

Script
Lakshmi Seshadri

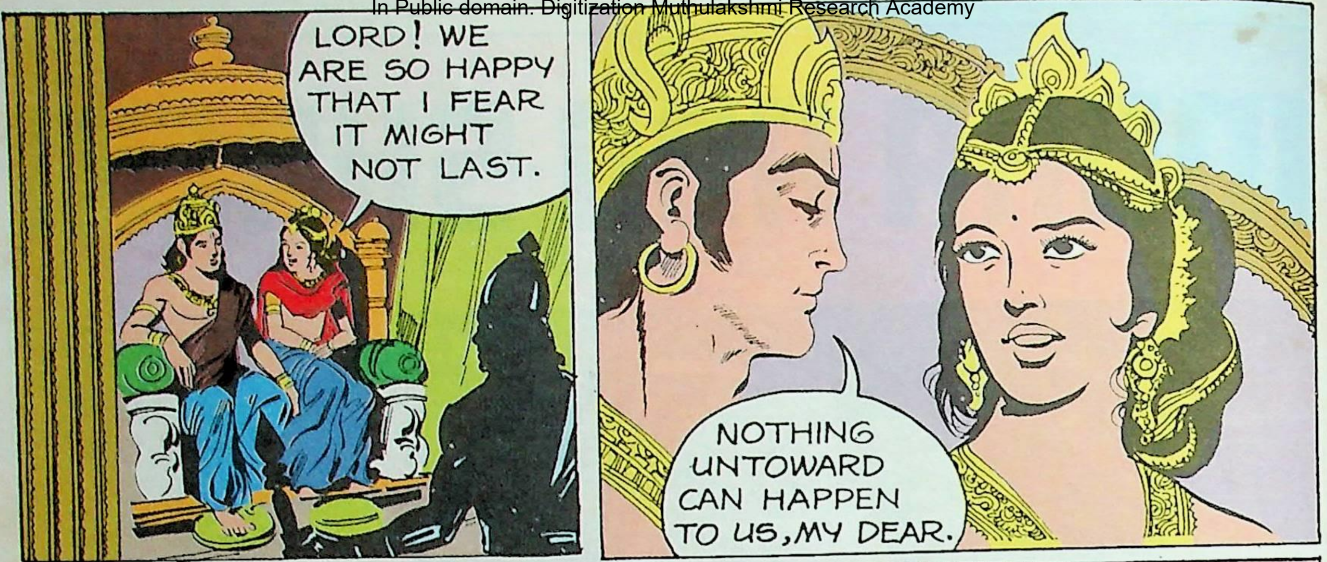
Illustrations
M.N.Nangare

Editor
Anant Pai

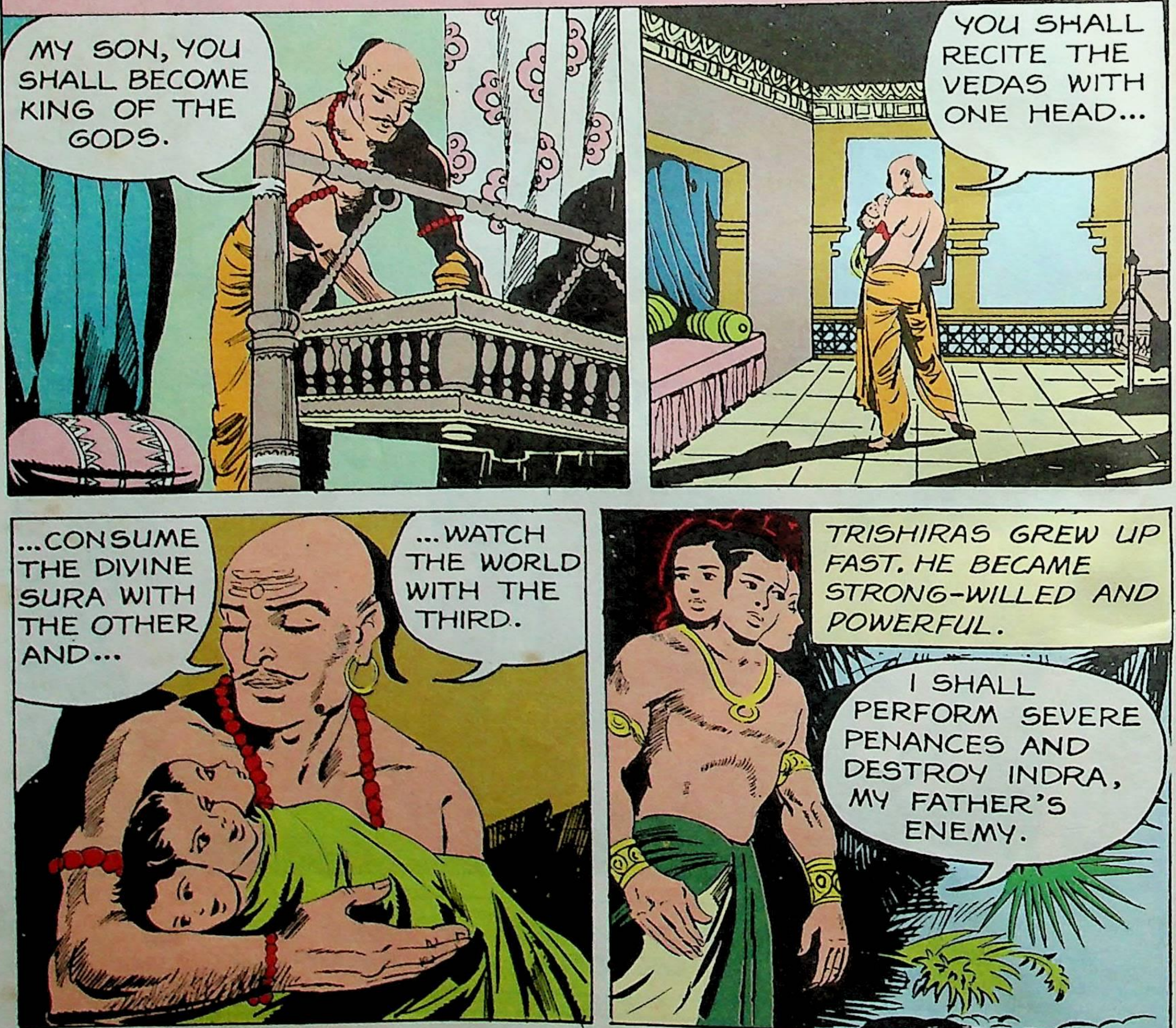
INDRA AND SHACHI



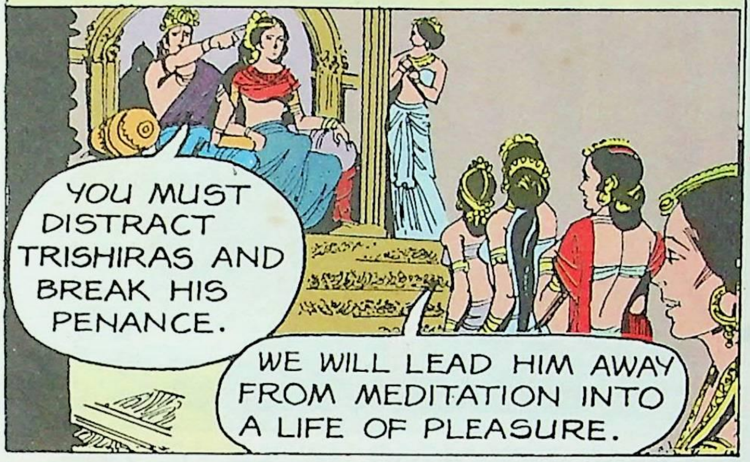
INDRA WAS THE KING OF THE DEVAS. HE LIVED WITH HIS QUEEN, SHACHI IN HIS CELESTIAL CITY, AMARAVATI.


LORD! WE ARE SO HAPPY THAT I FEAR IT MIGHT NOT LAST.
NOTHING UNTOWARD CAN HAPPEN TO US, MY DEAR.

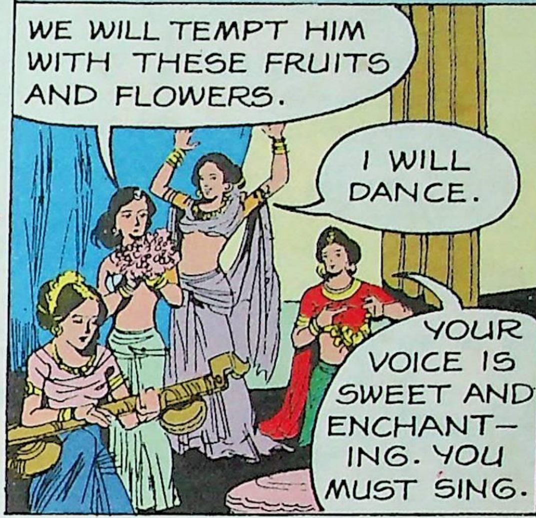
BUT THERE WAS CAUSE FOR THEM TO FEAR. AT THAT VERY MOMENT A SON WAS BORN TO TVASHTA, INDRA'S ENEMY.


MY SON, YOU SHALL BECOME KING OF THE GODS.
YOU SHALL RECITE THE VEDAS WITH ONE HEAD...
...CONSUME THE DIVINE SURA WITH THE OTHER AND...
...WATCH THE WORLD WITH THE THIRD.
TRISHIRAS GREW UP FAST. HE BECAME STRONG-WILLED AND POWERFUL.
I SHALL PERFORM SEVERE PENANCES AND DESTROY INDRA, MY FATHER'S ENEMY.

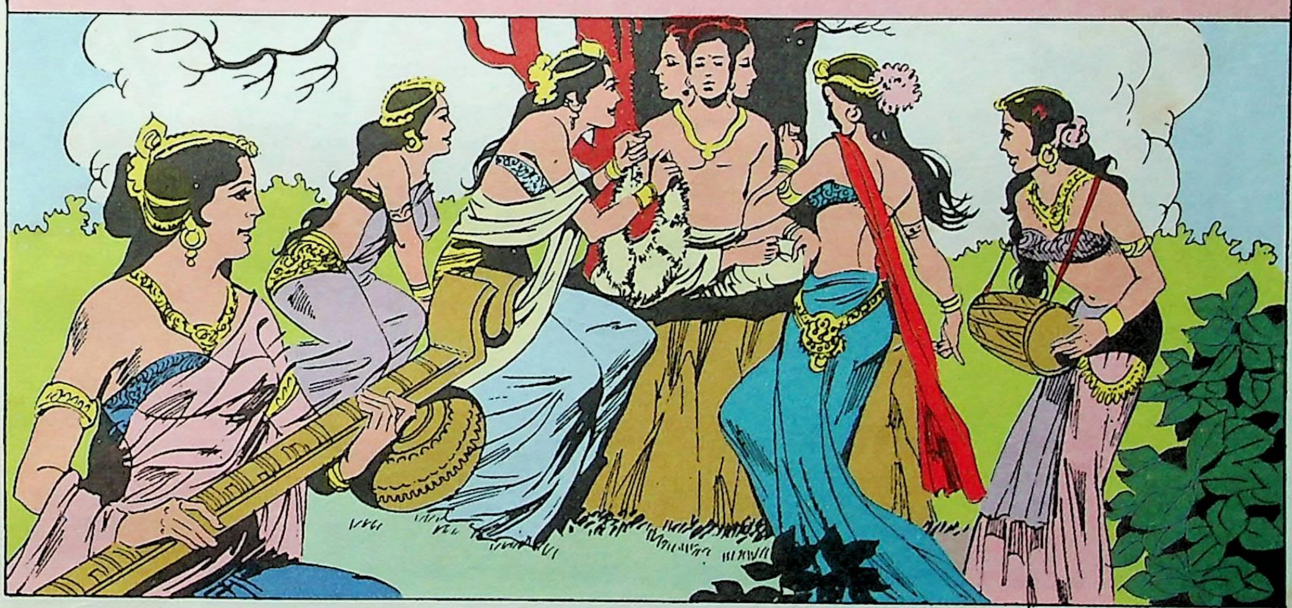
INDRA HEARD OF TRISHIRAS AND OF HIS INTENSE PENANCE TO DESTROY HIM. HE SENT FOR THE APSARAS, THE CELESTIAL MAIDENS...

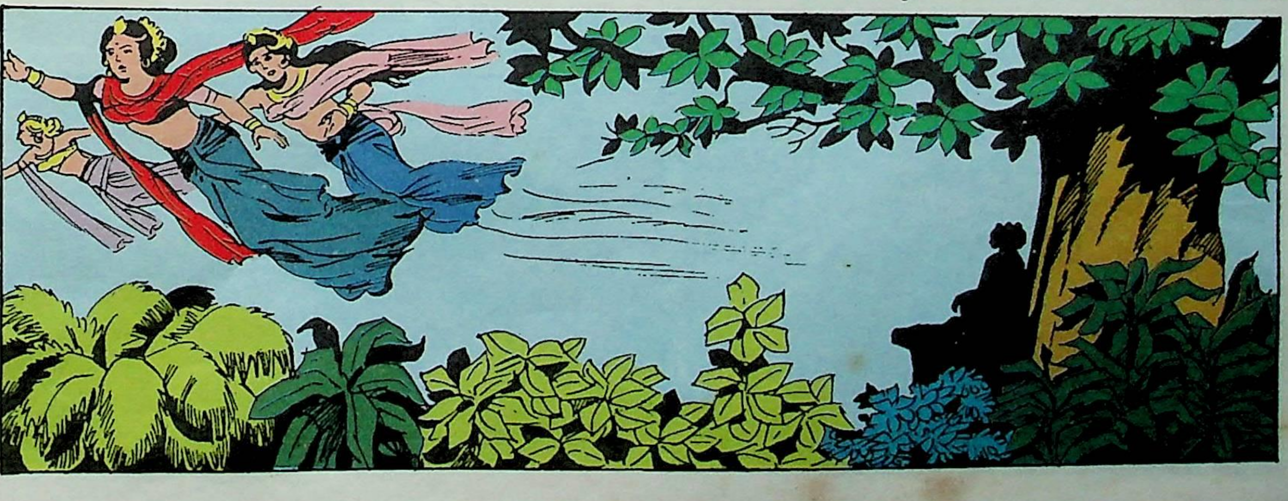

YOU MUST DISTRACT TRISHIRAS AND BREAK HIS PENANCE.
WE WILL LEAD HIM AWAY FROM MEDITATION INTO A LIFE OF PLEASURE.

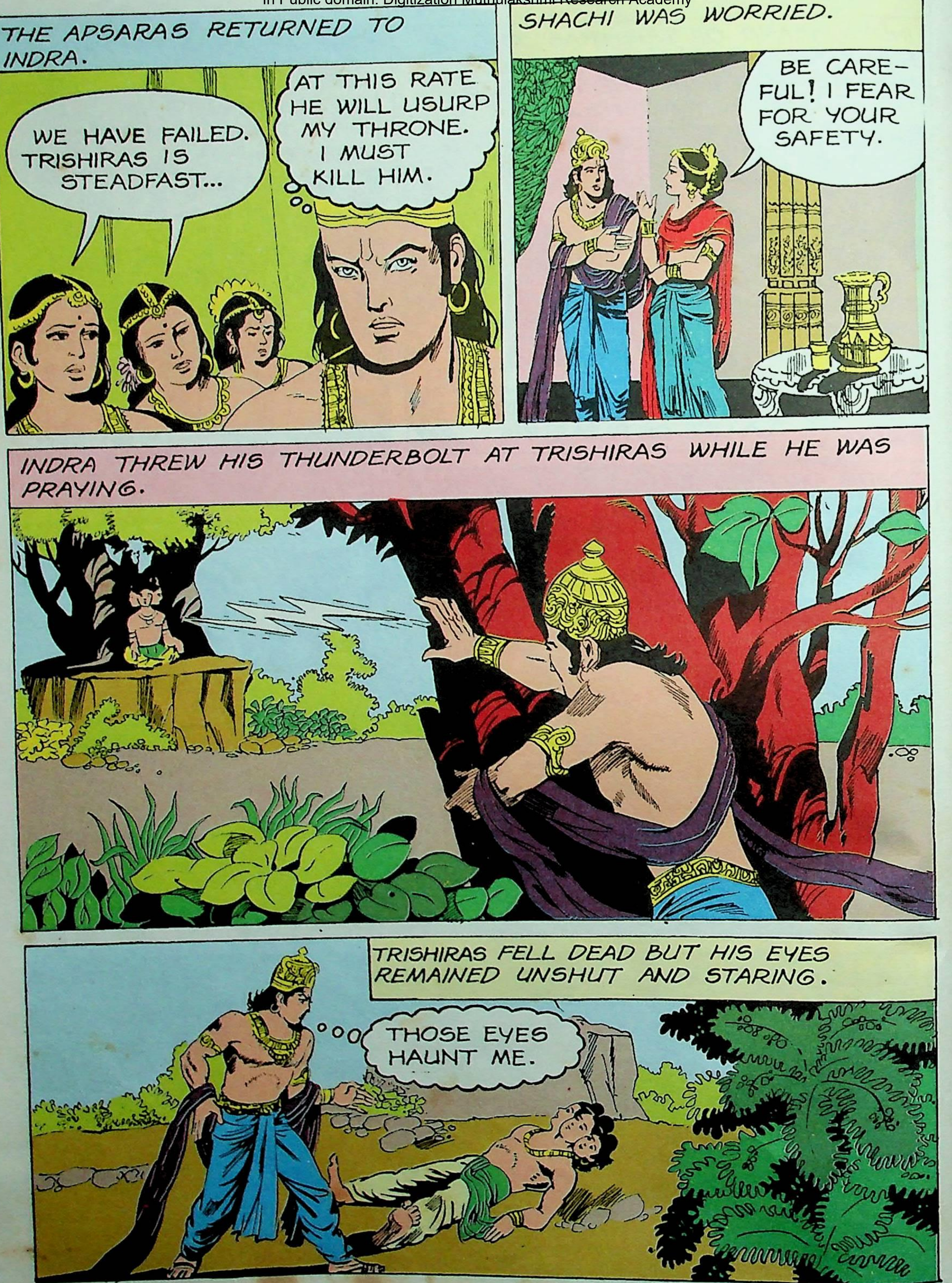
THE APSARAS PREPARED THEMSELVES.

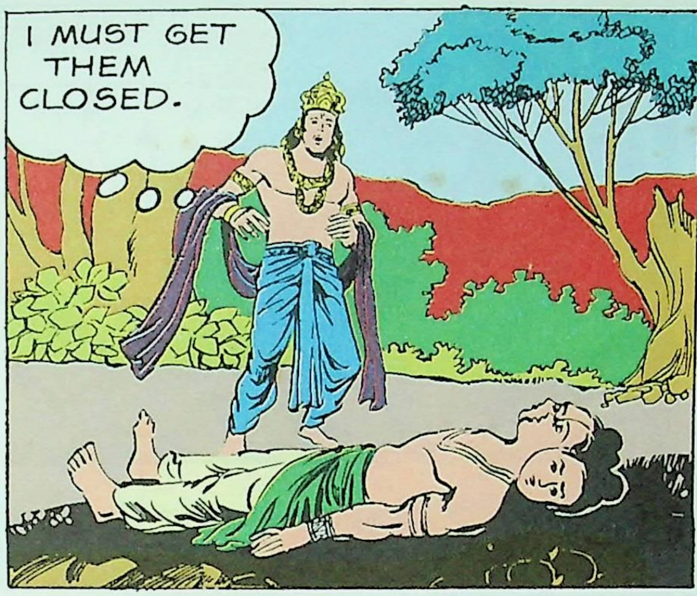

WE WILL TEMPT HIM WITH THESE FRUITS AND FLOWERS.
I WILL DANCE.
YOUR VOICE IS SWEET AND ENCHANTING. YOU MUST SING.

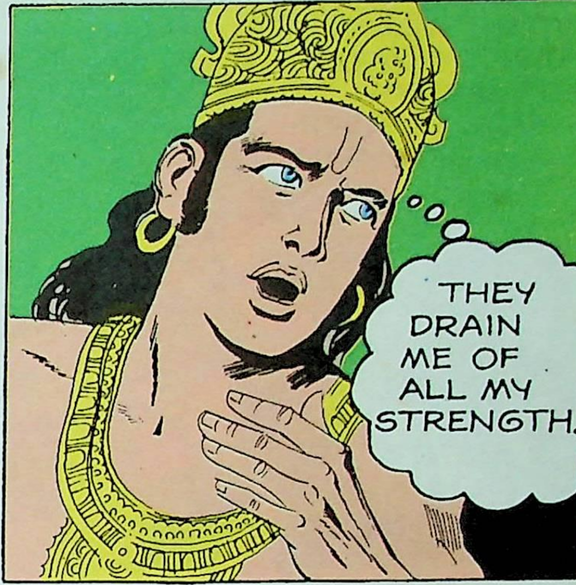
THEIR CHARMS WERE HEAVENLY. BUT TRISHIRAS WAS UNMOVED.



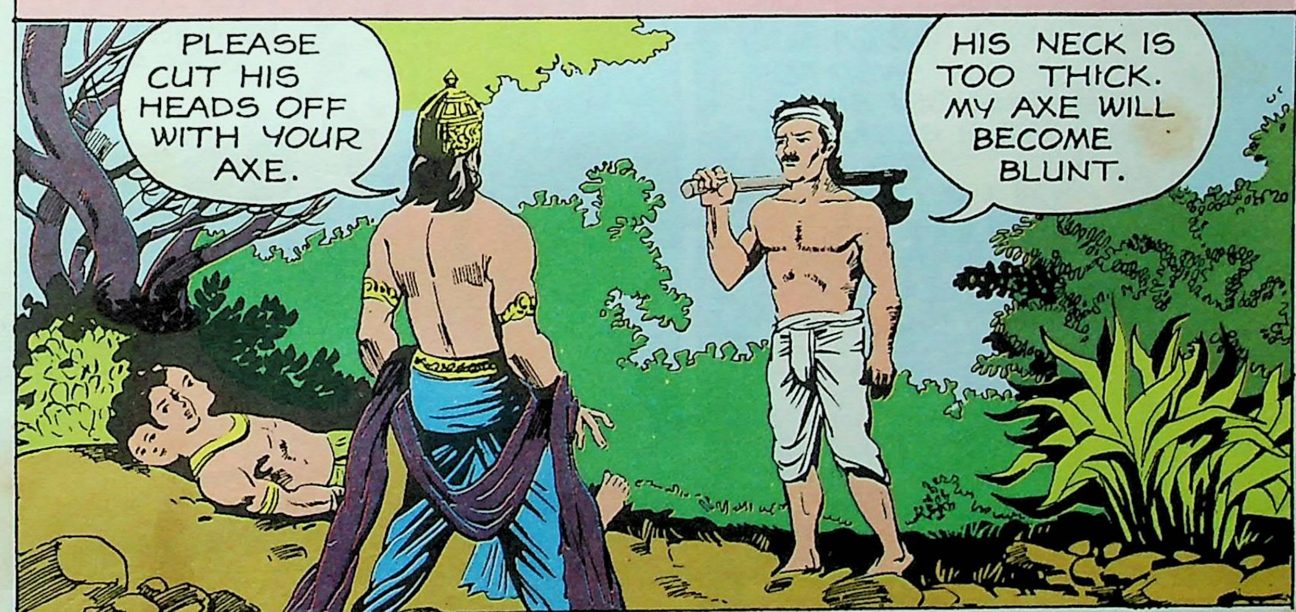


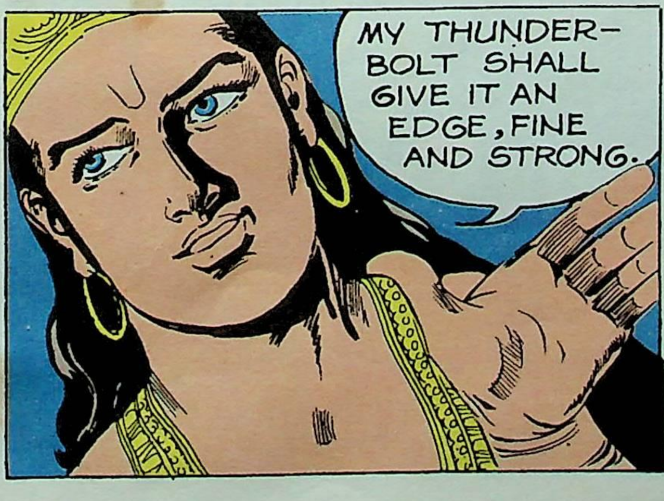

THE APSARAS RETURNED TO INDRA.
WE HAVE FAILED. TRISHIRAS IS STEADFAST...
AT THIS RATE HE WILL USURP MY THRONE. I MUST KILL HIM.
SHACHI WAS WORRIED.
BE CAREFUL! I FEAR FOR YOUR SAFETY.
INDRA THREW HIS THUNDERBOLT AT TRISHIRAS WHILE HE WAS PRAYING.
TRISHIRAS FELL DEAD BUT HIS EYES REMAINED UNSHUT AND STARING.
THOSE EYES HAUNT ME.


I MUST GET THEM CLOSED.

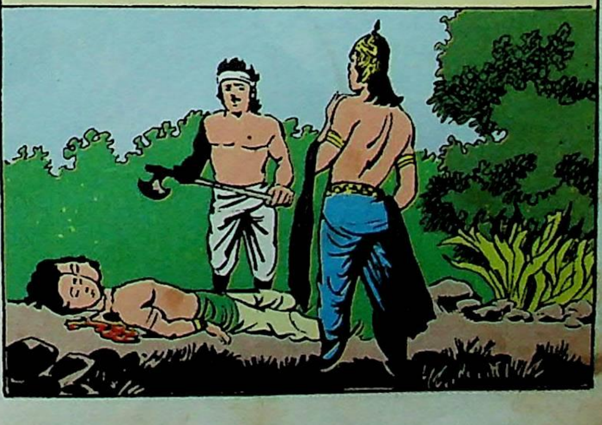

THEY DRAIN ME OF ALL MY STRENGTH.

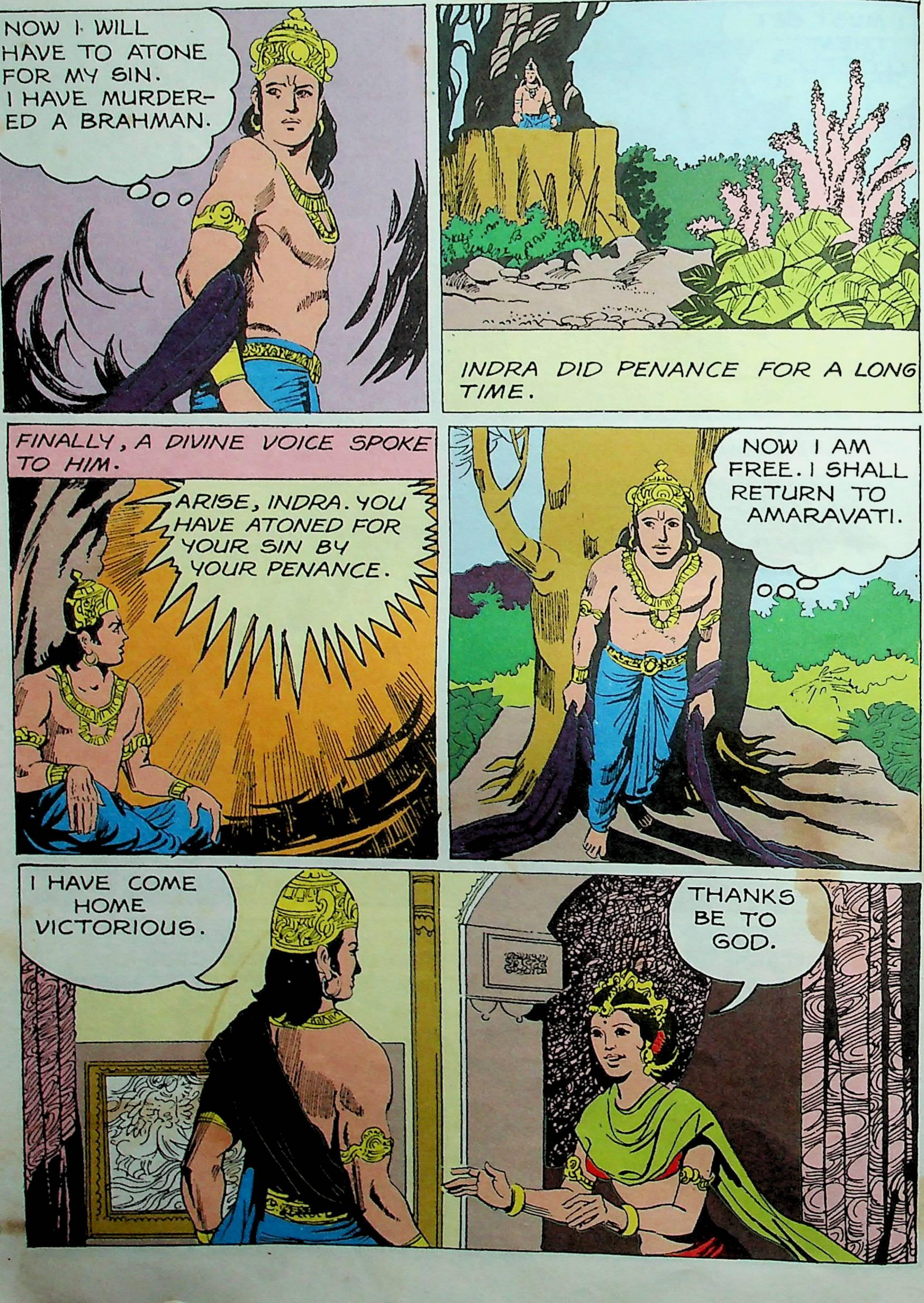
AT THAT MOMENT A WOODCUTTER HAPPENED TO PASS BY.


PLEASE CUT HIS HEADS OFF WITH YOUR AXE.
HIS NECK IS TOO THICK. MY AXE WILL BECOME BLUNT.

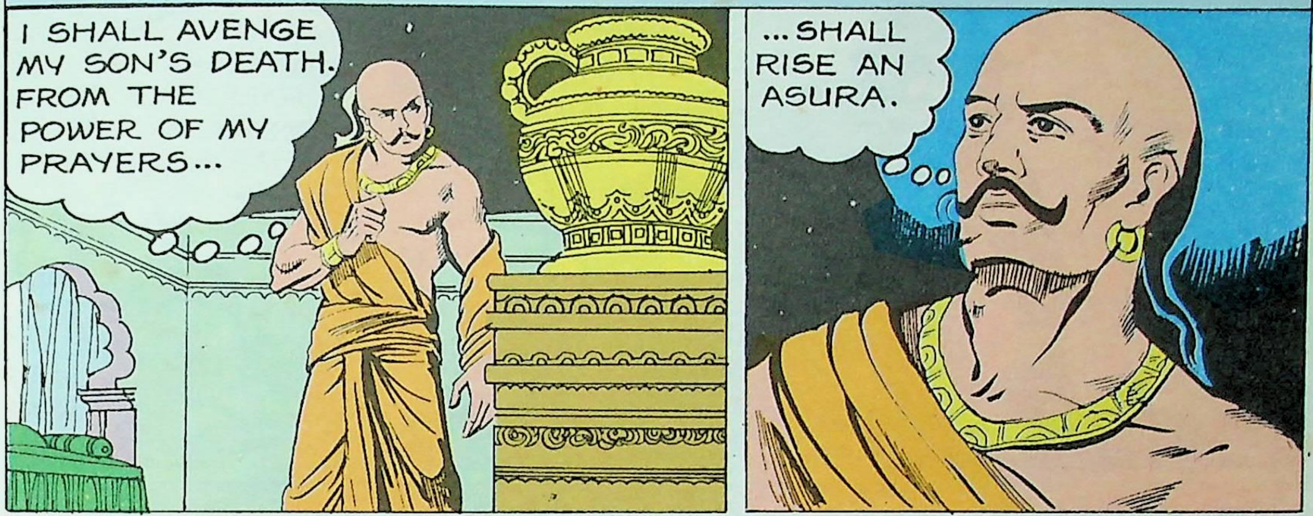

MY THUNDER-BOLT SHALL GIVE IT AN EDGE, FINE AND STRONG.

THE WOODCUTTER CUT TRISHIRAS' HEADS OFF.

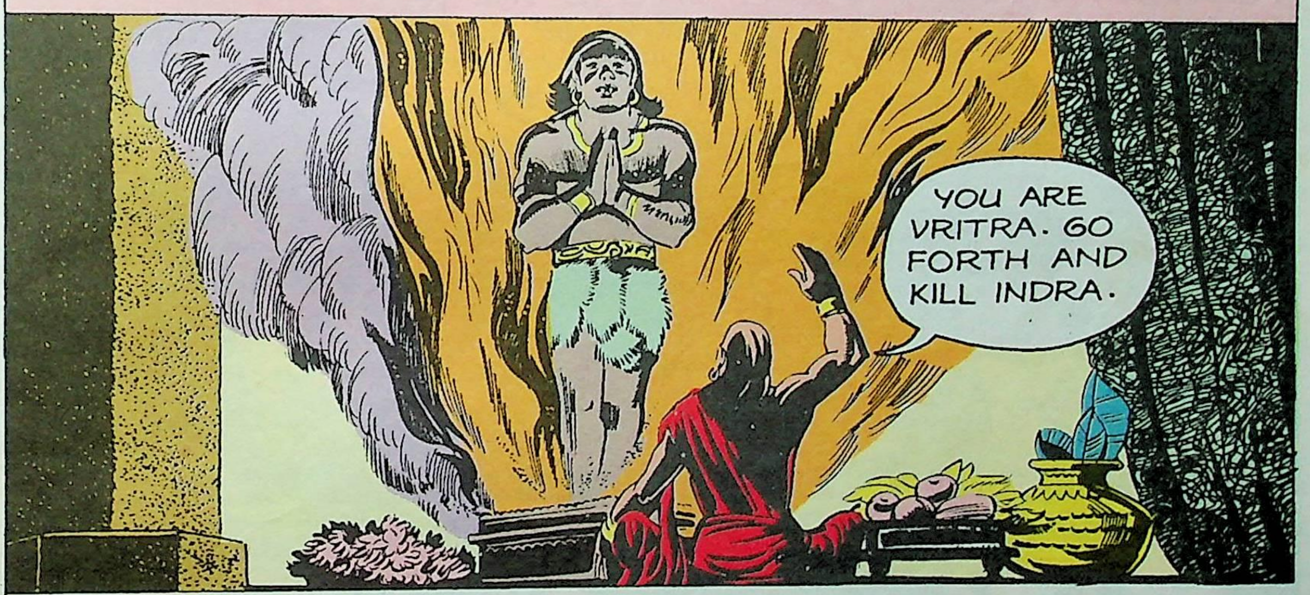



NOW I WILL HAVE TO ATONE FOR MY SIN. I HAVE MURDERED A BRAHMAN.
INDRA DID PENANCE FOR A LONG TIME.
FINALLY, A DIVINE VOICE SPOKE TO HIM.
ARISE, INDRA. YOU HAVE ATONED FOR YOUR SIN BY YOUR PENANCE.
NOW I AM FREE. I SHALL RETURN TO AMARAVATI.
I HAVE COME HOME VICTORIOUS.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

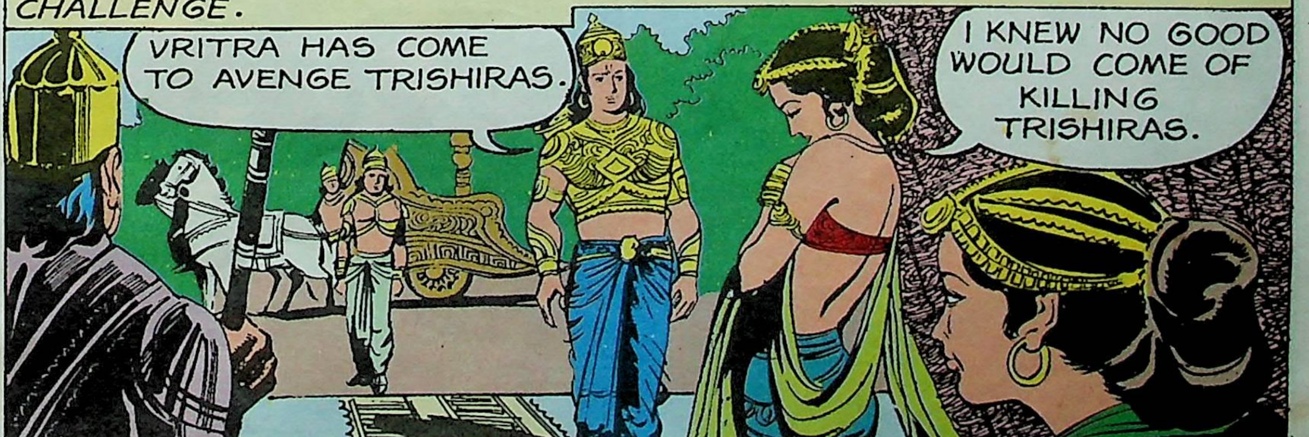
MEANWHILE TVASHTA HEARD OF TRISHIRAS' DEATH. HE WAS DEEPLY GRIEVED AND VERY ANGRY.


I SHALL AVENGE MY SON'S DEATH. FROM THE POWER OF MY PRAYERS...
...SHALL RISE AN ASURA.

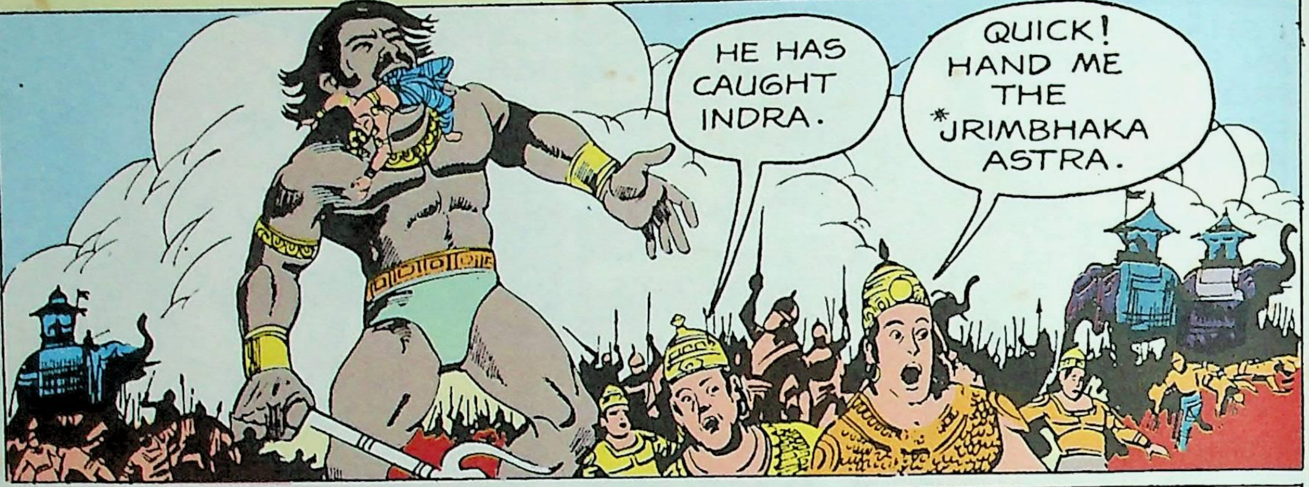
TVASHTA PERFORMED A SACRIFICE AND CREATED AN ASURA.


YOU ARE VRITRA. GO FORTH AND KILL INDRA.

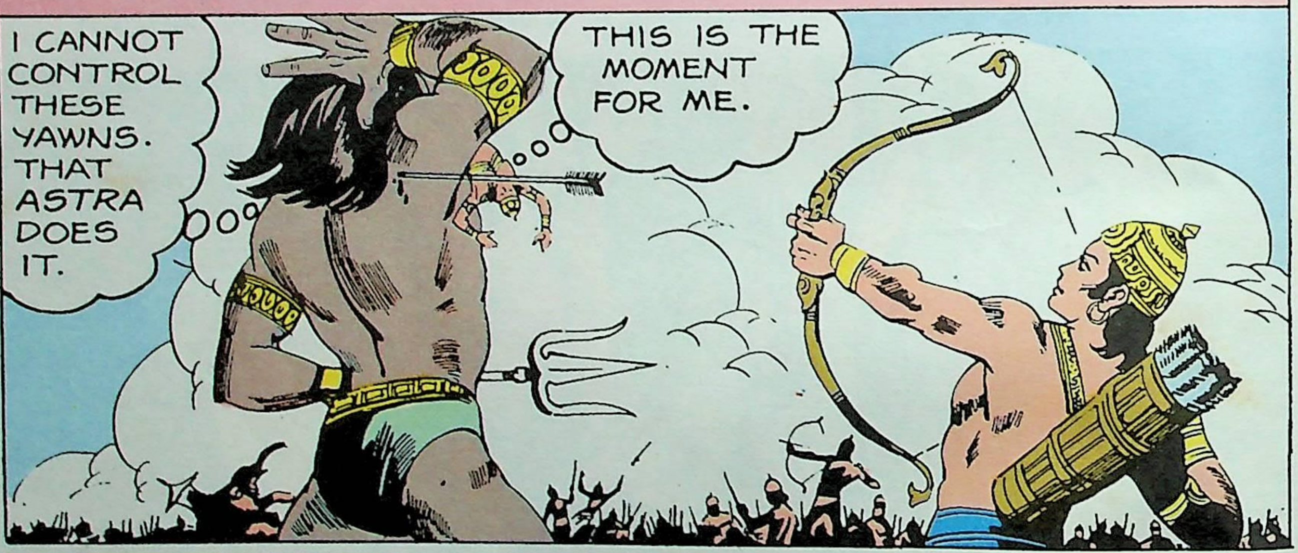
WHEN INDRA HEARD OF VRITRA, HE PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE.


VRITRA HAS COME TO AVENGE TRISHIRAS.
I KNEW NO GOOD WOULD COME OF KILLING TRISHIRAS.

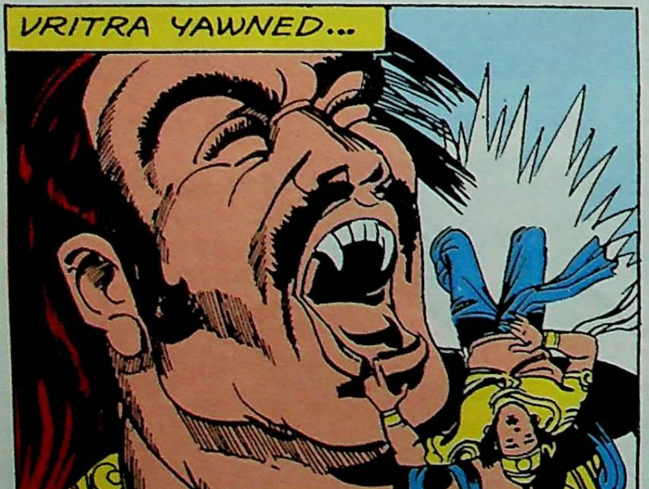
THERE WAS A TERRIBLE BATTLE IN WHICH VRITRA CAUGHT INDRA BETWEEN HIS TEETH.


HE HAS CAUGHT INDRA.
QUICK! HAND ME THE *JRIMBHAKA ASTRA.

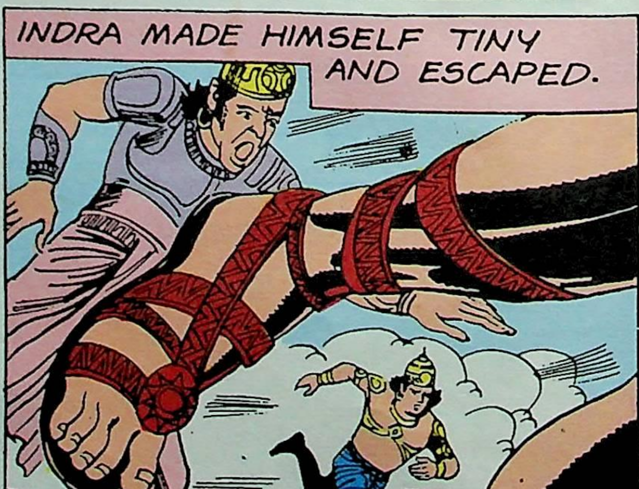
THE JRIMBHAKA ASTRA FOUND ITS MARK.


I CANNOT CONTROL THESE YAWNS. THAT ASTRA DOES IT.
THIS IS THE MOMENT FOR ME.

VRITRA YAWNED...



INDRA MADE HIMSELF TINY AND ESCAPED.



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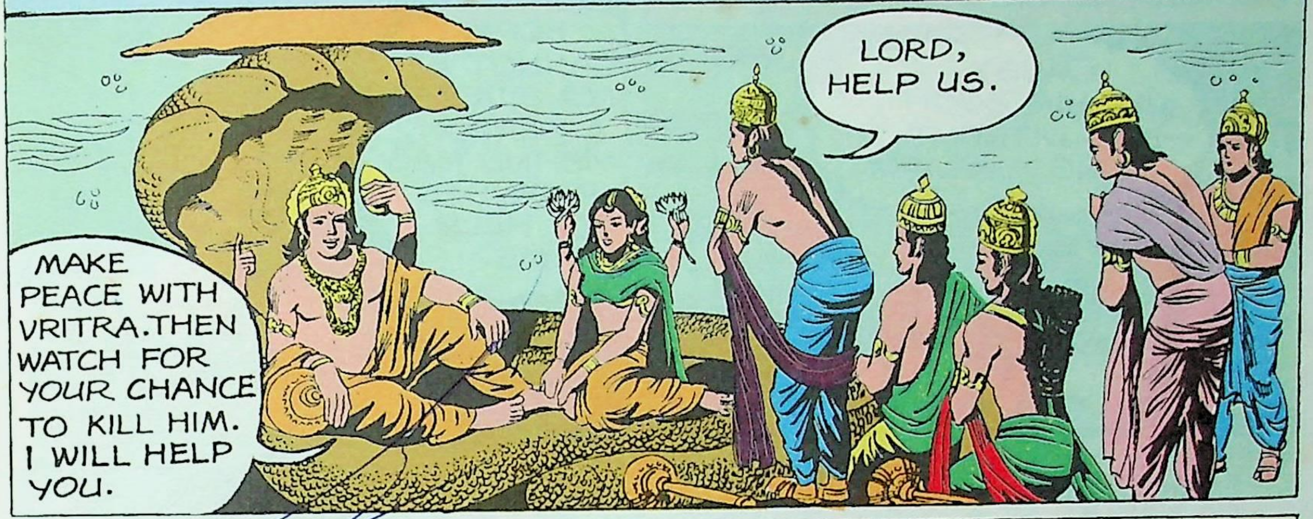
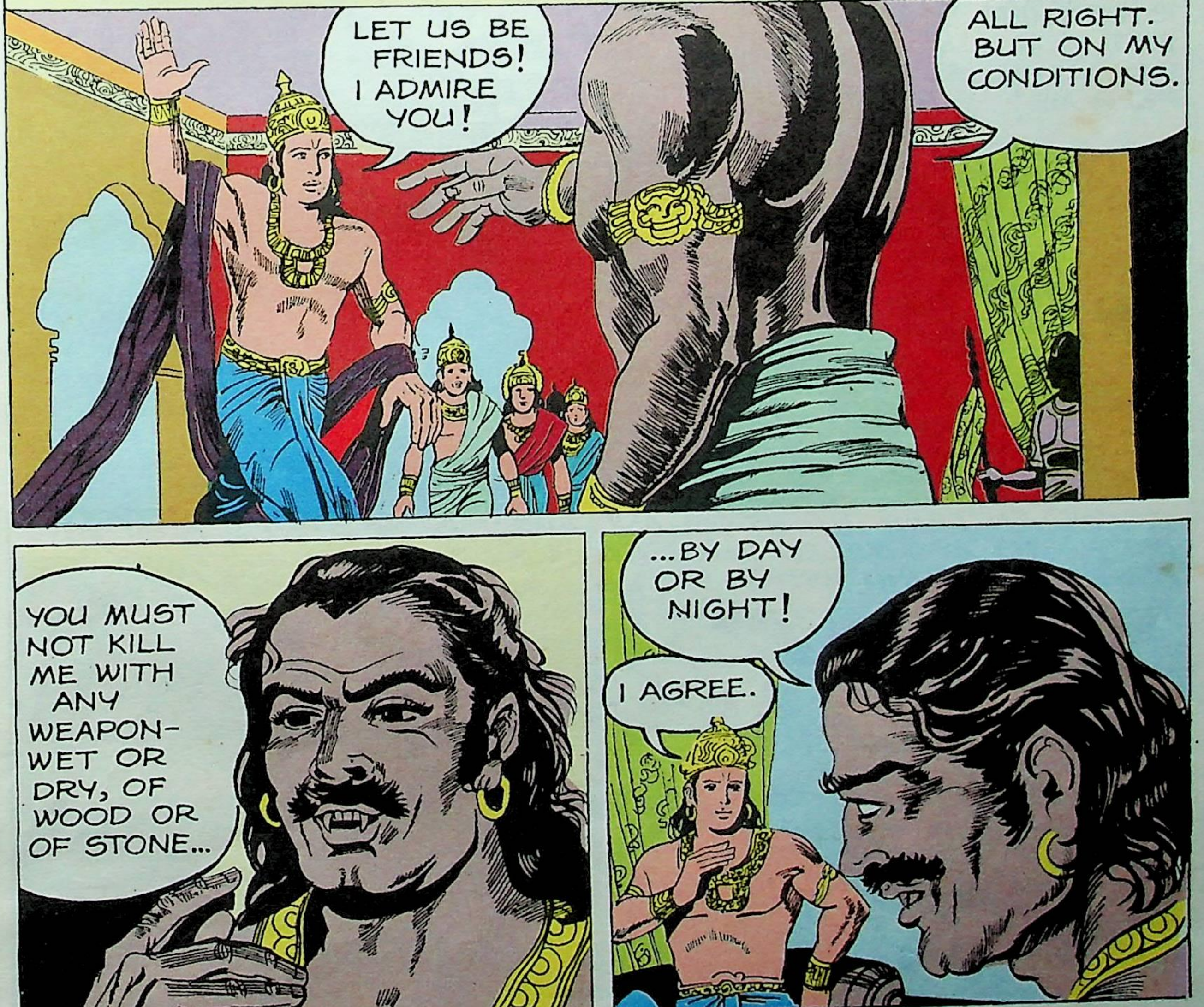
* AN ARROW WHICH MAKES A MAN YAWN.

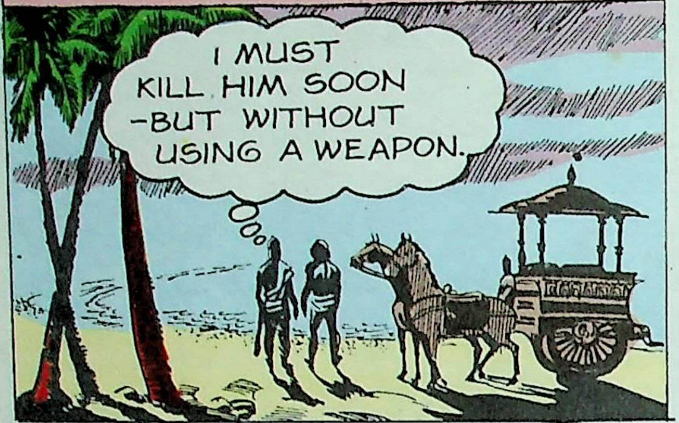
HE AND HIS SUBJECTS WENT TO VISHNU FOR ADVICE.

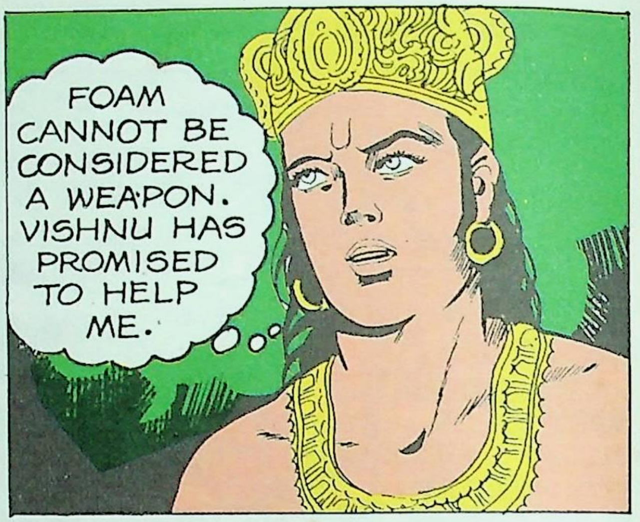

LORD, HELP US.
MAKE PEACE WITH VRITRA. THEN WATCH FOR YOUR CHANCE TO KILL HIM. I WILL HELP YOU.

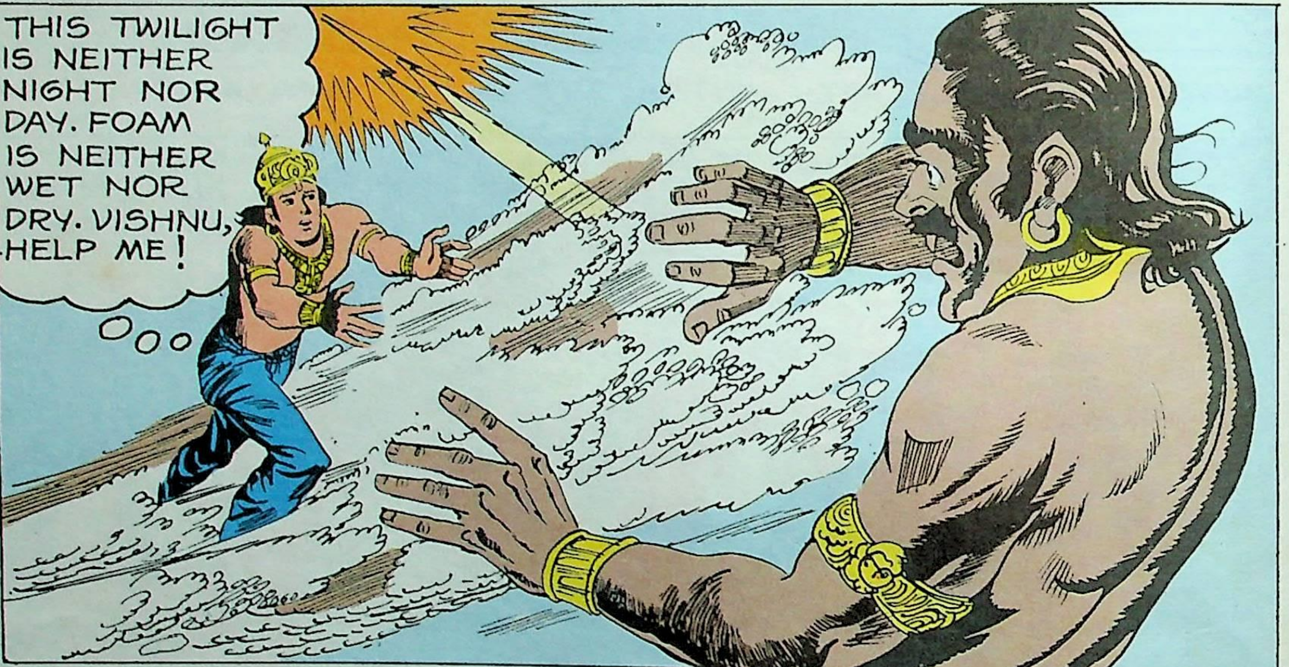
INDRA MADE PEACE WITH VRITRA. BUT VRITRA WAS WARY.


LET US BE FRIENDS! I ADMIRE YOU!
ALL RIGHT. BUT ON MY CONDITIONS.
YOU MUST NOT KILL ME WITH ANY WEAPON- WET OR DRY, OF WOOD OR OF STONE...
...BY DAY OR BY NIGHT!
I AGREE.

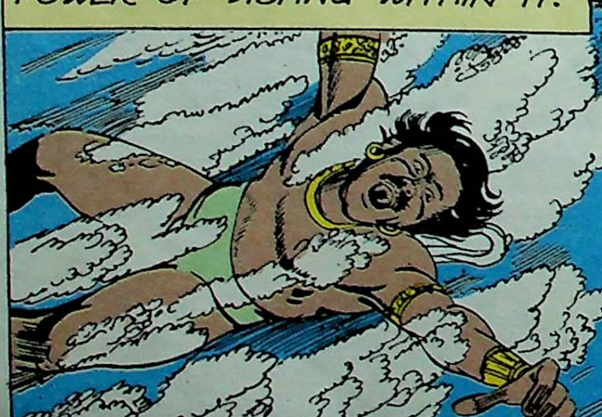
ONE EVENING THEY WERE ON THE SEA-SHORE.

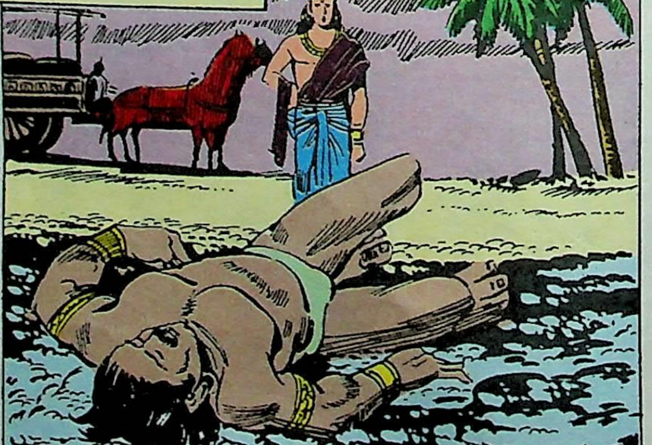

I MUST KILL HIM SOON -BUT WITHOUT USING A WEAPON.


FOAM CANNOT BE CONSIDERED A WEAPON. VISHNU HAS PROMISED TO HELP ME.

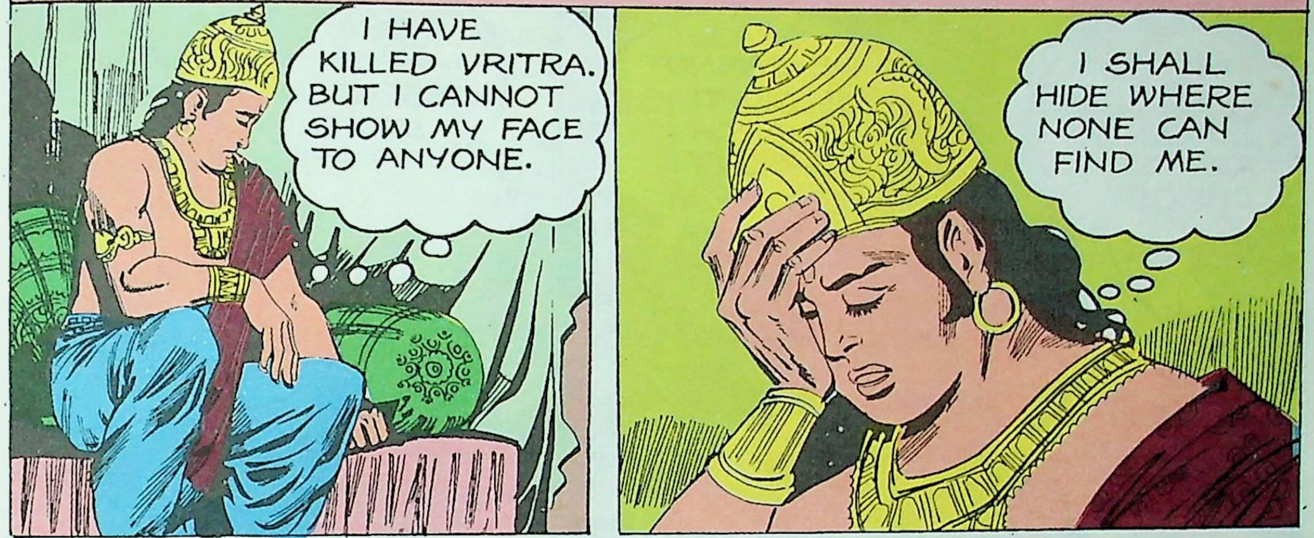

THIS TWILIGHT IS NEITHER NIGHT NOR DAY. FOAM IS NEITHER WET NOR DRY. VISHNU, HELP ME!

VISHNU ENTERED THE FOAM AND WHEN INDRA THREW IT AT VRITRA, HE WAS KILLED IMMEDIATELY BY THE POWER OF VISHNU WITHIN IT.

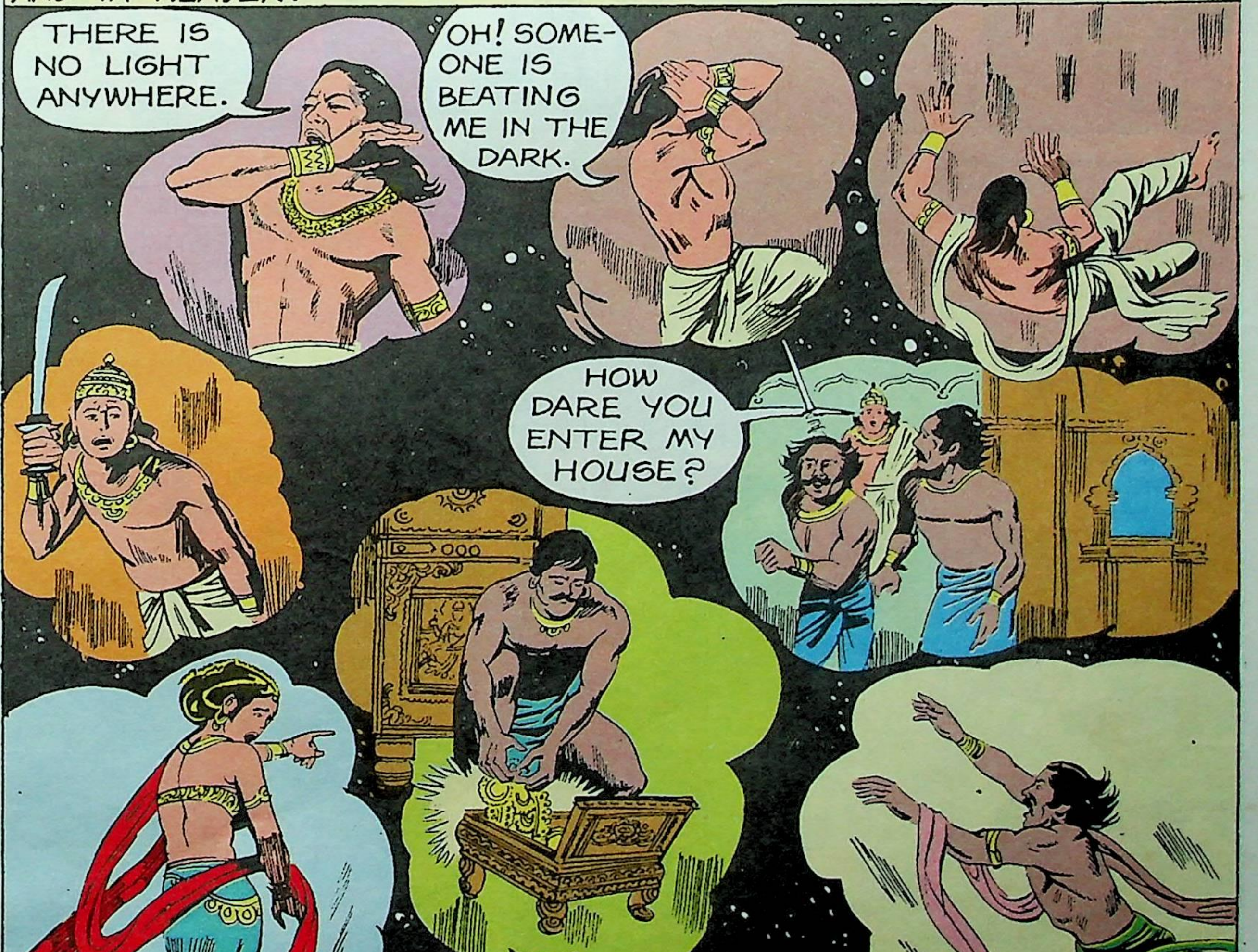




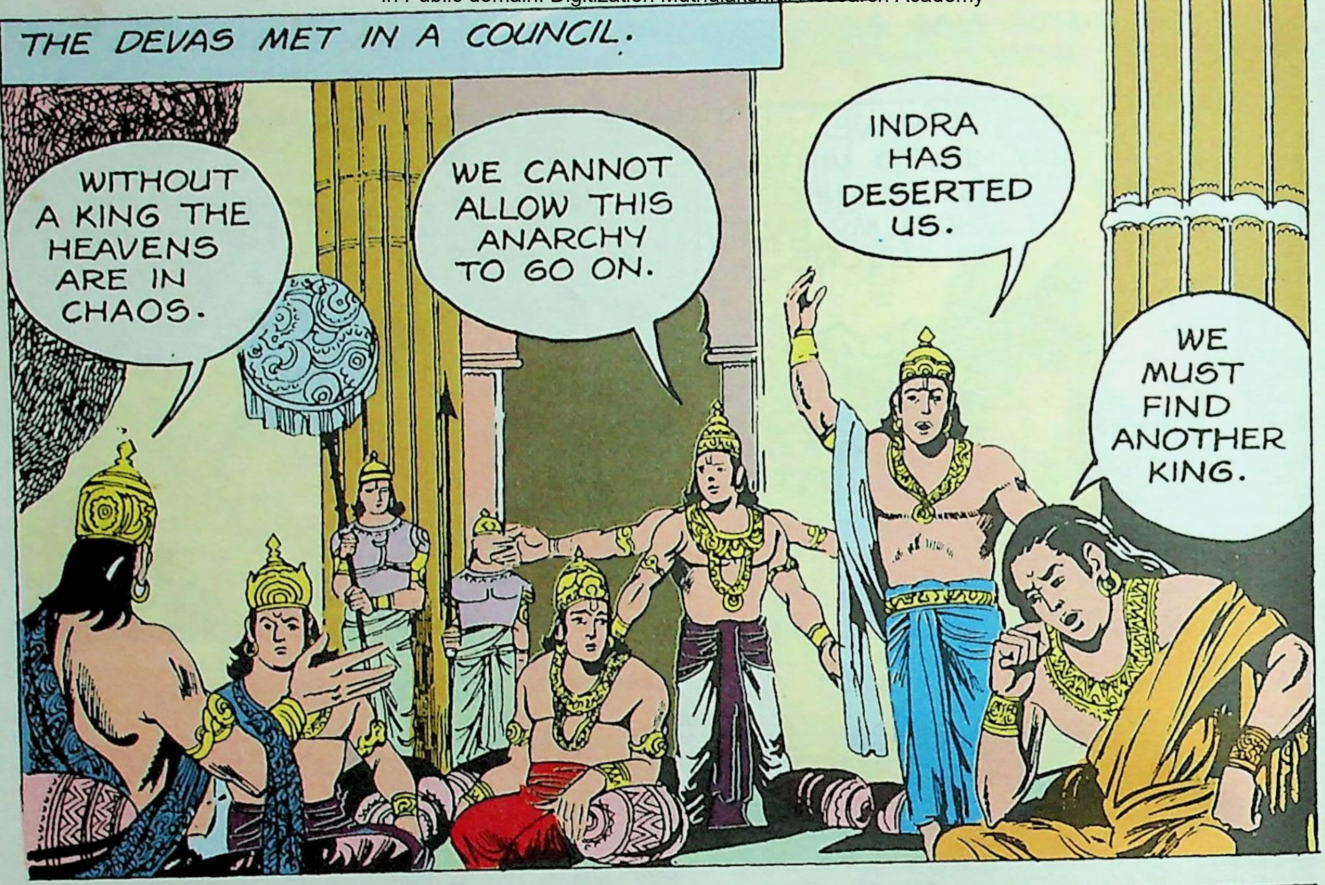
BUT AS INDRA HAD BETRAYED VRITRA HE WAS ASHAMED TO FACE THE WORLD.

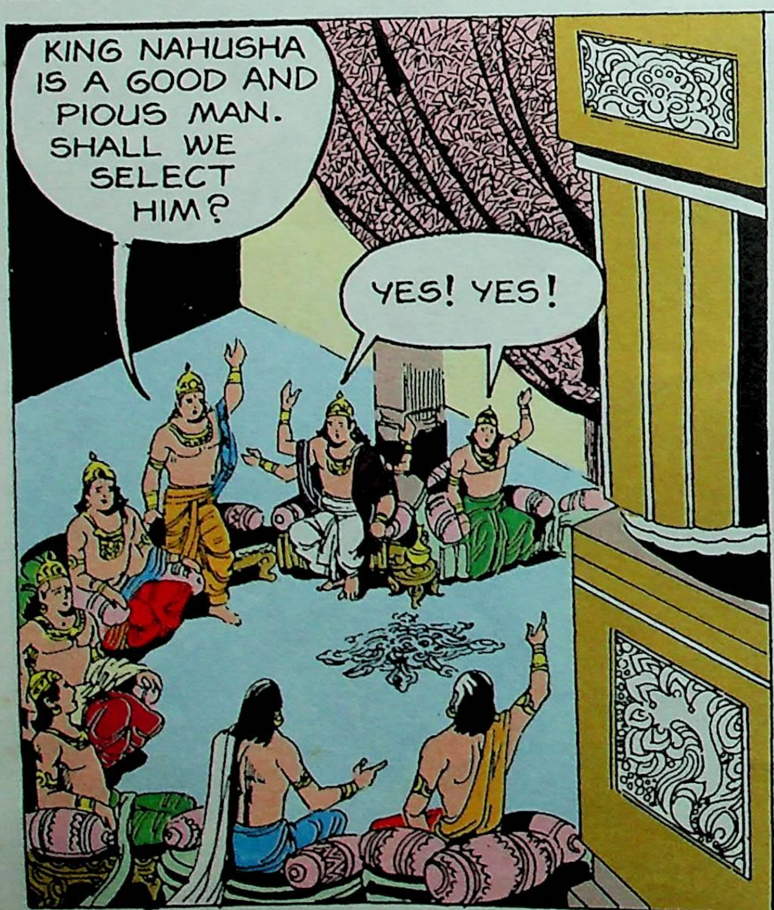

I HAVE KILLED VRITRA. BUT I CANNOT SHOW MY FACE TO ANYONE.
I SHALL HIDE WHERE NONE CAN FIND ME.

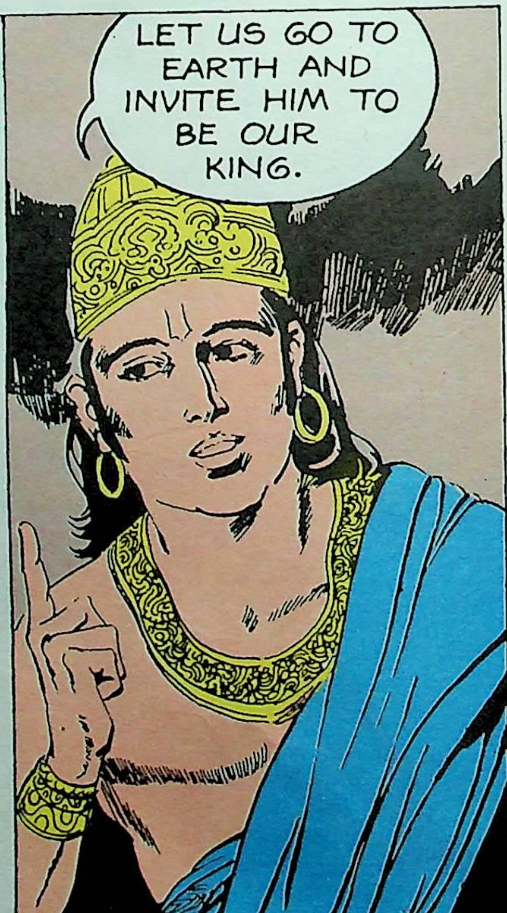
INDRA RAN AWAY. ALL WAS DARKNESS AND CHAOS, ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN.

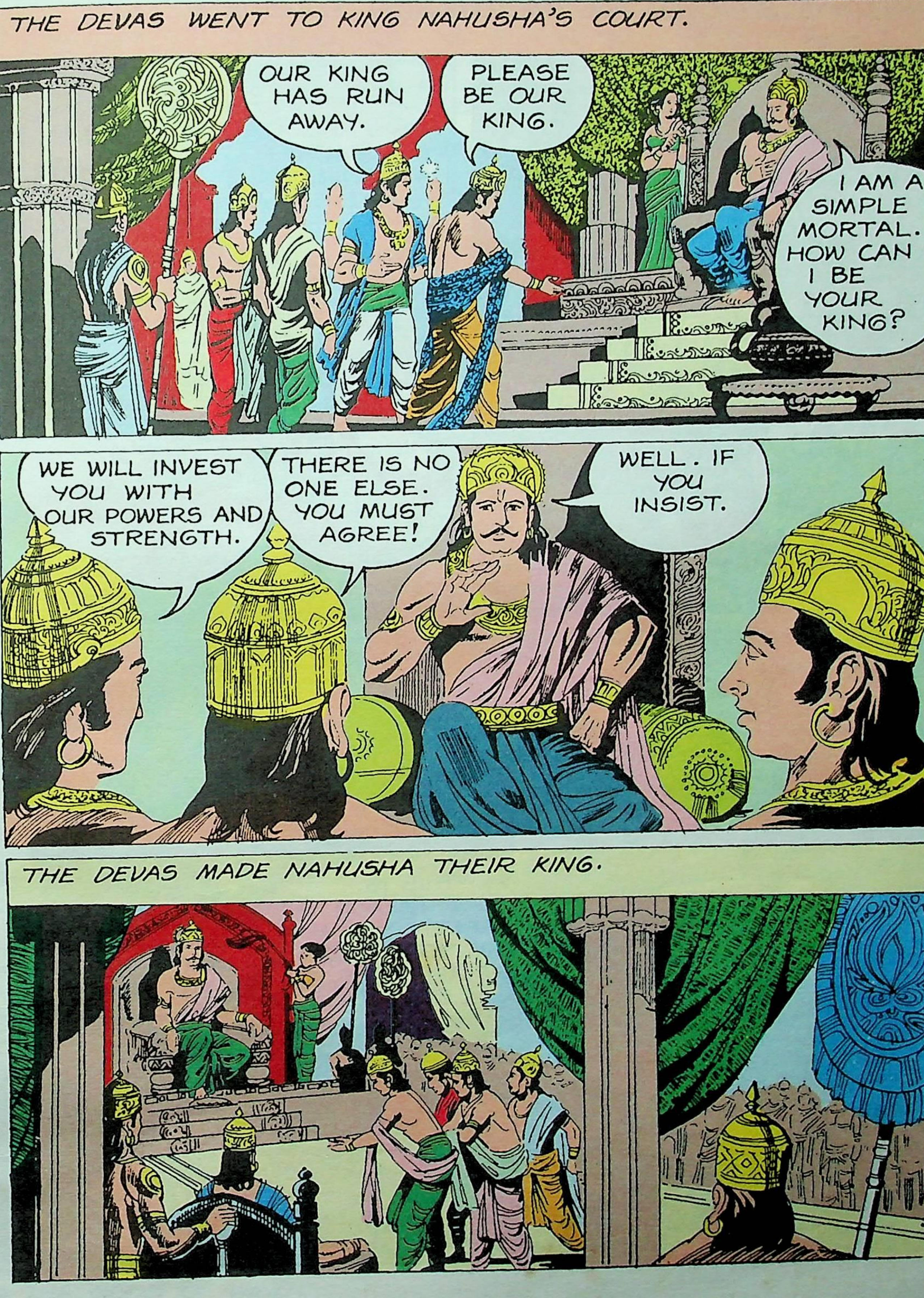

THERE IS NO LIGHT ANYWHERE.
OH! SOMEONE IS BEATING ME IN THE DARK.
HOW DARE YOU ENTER MY HOUSE?

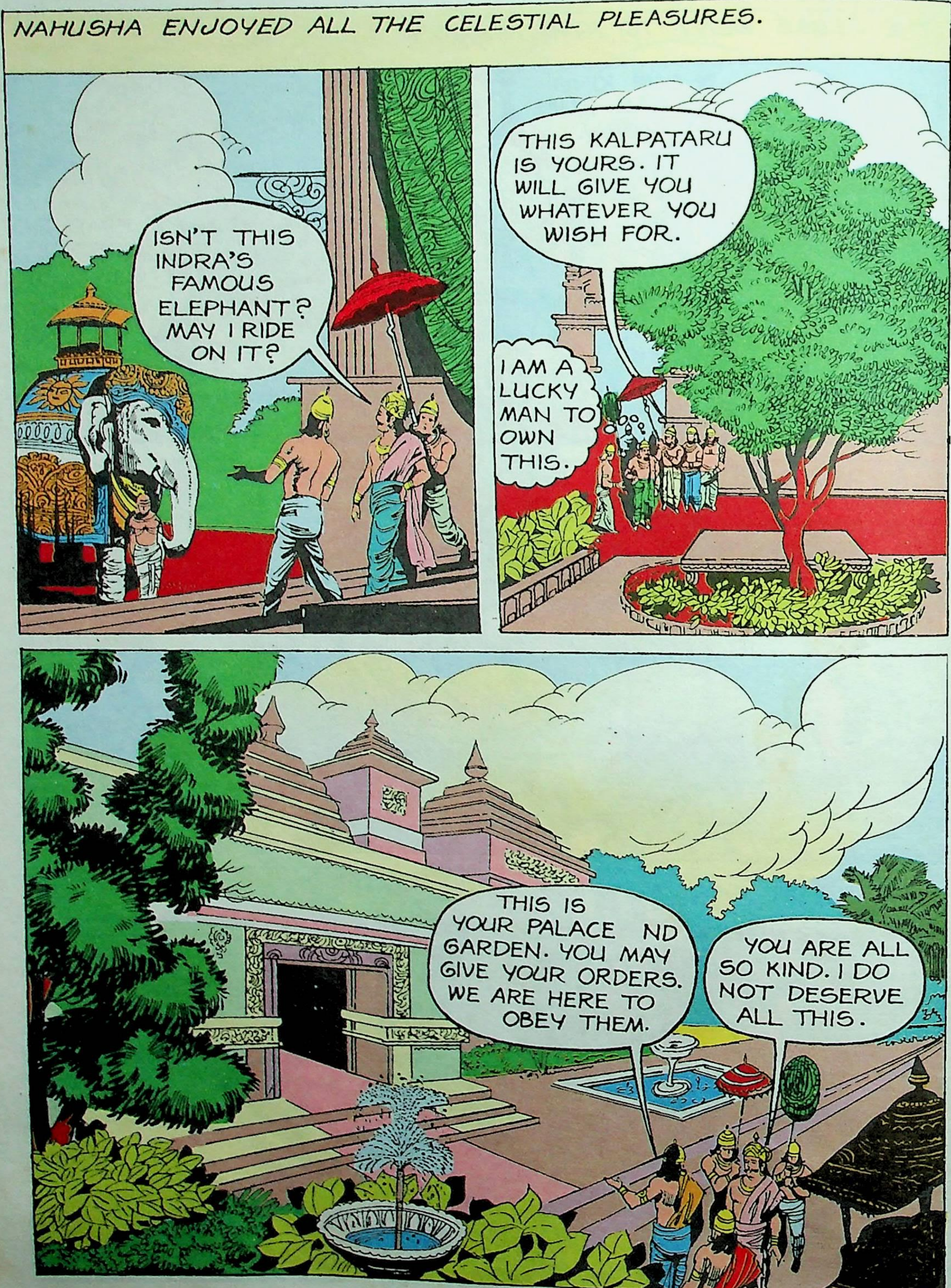
THE DEVAS MET IN A COUNCIL.

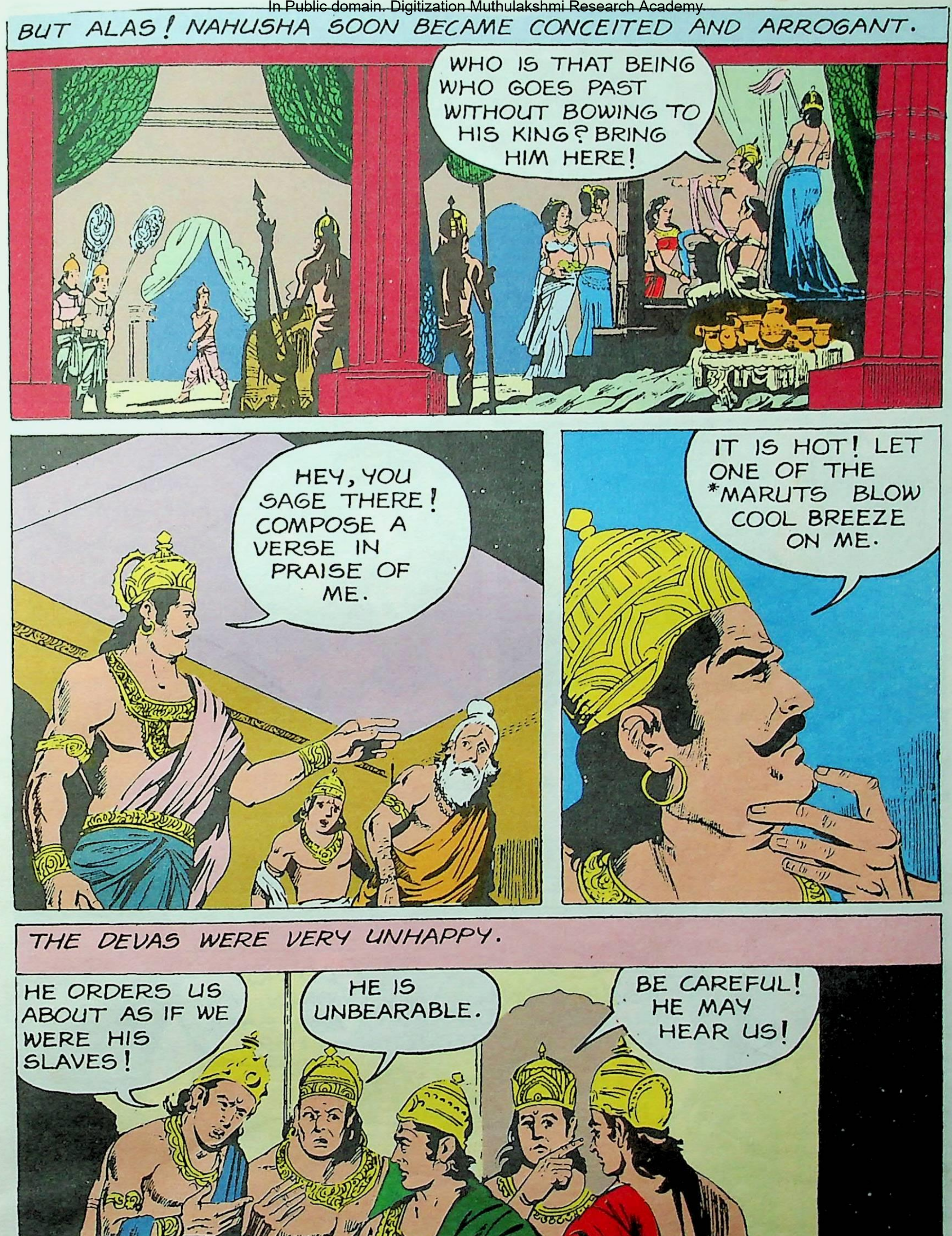

WITHOUT A KING THE HEAVENS ARE IN CHAOS.
WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS ANARCHY TO GO ON.
INDRA HAS DESERTED US.
WE MUST FIND ANOTHER KING.


KING NAHUSHA IS A GOOD AND PIOUS MAN. SHALL WE SELECT HIM?
YES! YES!

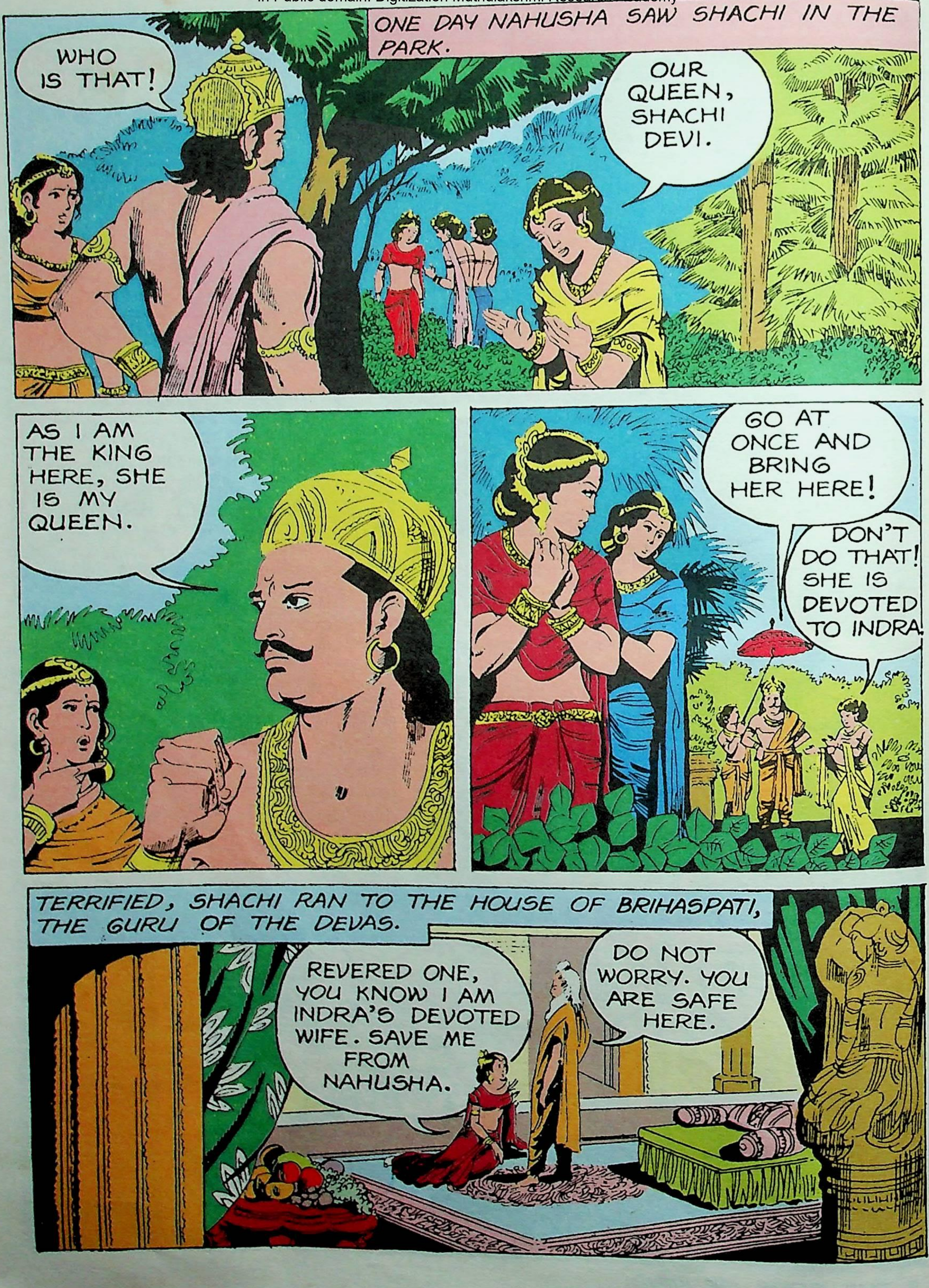

LET US GO TO EARTH AND INVITE HIM TO BE OUR KING.


THE DEVAS WENT TO KING NAHUSHA'S COURT.
OUR KING HAS RUN AWAY.
PLEASE BE OUR KING.
I AM A SIMPLE MORTAL. HOW CAN I BE YOUR KING?
WE WILL INVEST YOU WITH OUR POWERS AND STRENGTH.
THERE IS NO ONE ELSE. YOU MUST AGREE!
WELL. IF YOU INSIST.
THE DEVAS MADE NAHUSHA THEIR KING.

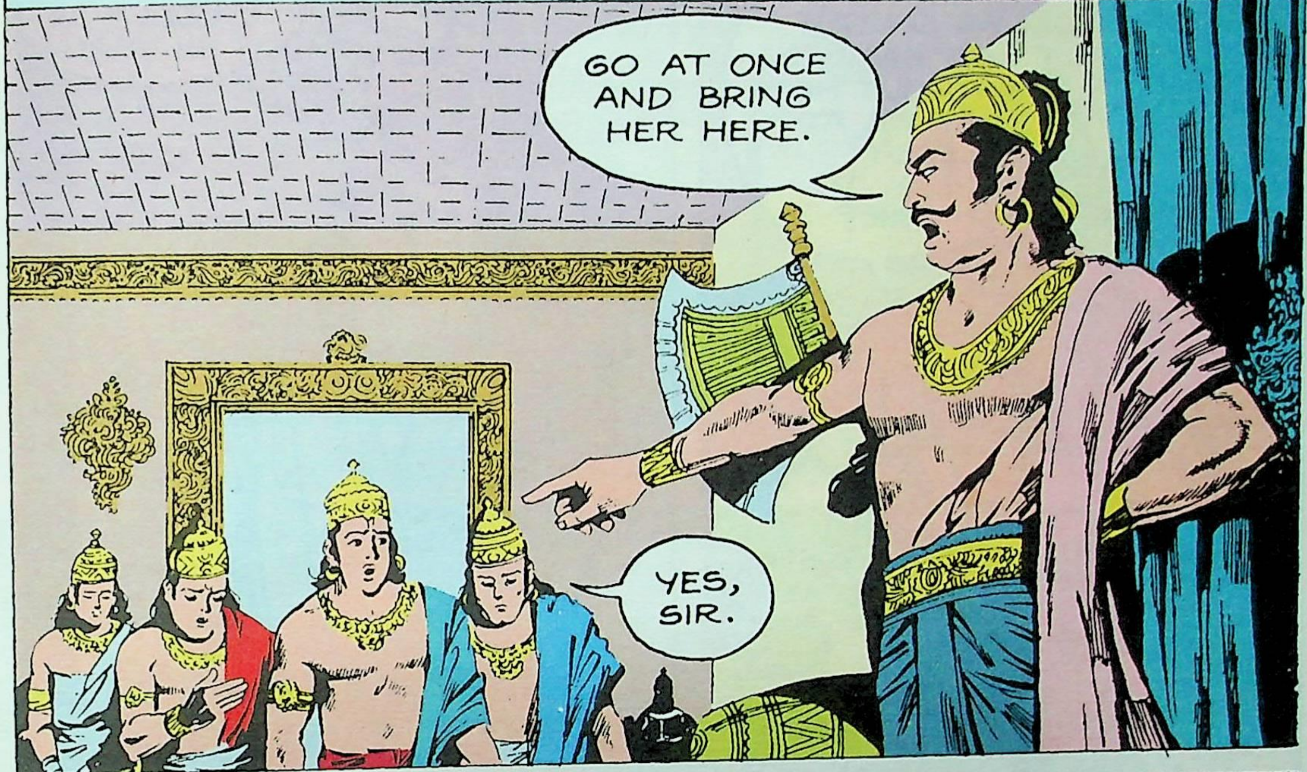

NAHUSHA ENJOYED ALL THE CELESTIAL PLEASURES.
ISN'T THIS INDRA'S FAMOUS ELEPHANT? MAY I RIDE ON IT?
THIS KALPATARU IS YOURS. IT WILL GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU WISH FOR.
I AM A LUCKY MAN TO OWN THIS.
THIS IS YOUR PALACE ND GARDEN. YOU MAY GIVE YOUR ORDERS. WE ARE HERE TO OBEY THEM.
YOU ARE ALL SO KIND. I DO NOT DESERVE ALL THIS.


BUT ALAS! NAHUSHA SOON BECAME CONCEITED AND ARROGANT.
WHO IS THAT BEING WHO GOES PAST WITHOUT BOWING TO HIS KING? BRING HIM HERE!
HEY, YOU SAGE THERE! COMPOSE A VERSE IN PRAISE OF ME.
IT IS HOT! LET ONE OF THE *MARUTS BLOW COOL BREEZE ON ME.
THE DEVAS WERE VERY UNHAPPY.
HE ORDERS US ABOUT AS IF WE WERE HIS SLAVES!
HE IS UNBEARABLE.
BE CAREFUL! HE MAY HEAR US!

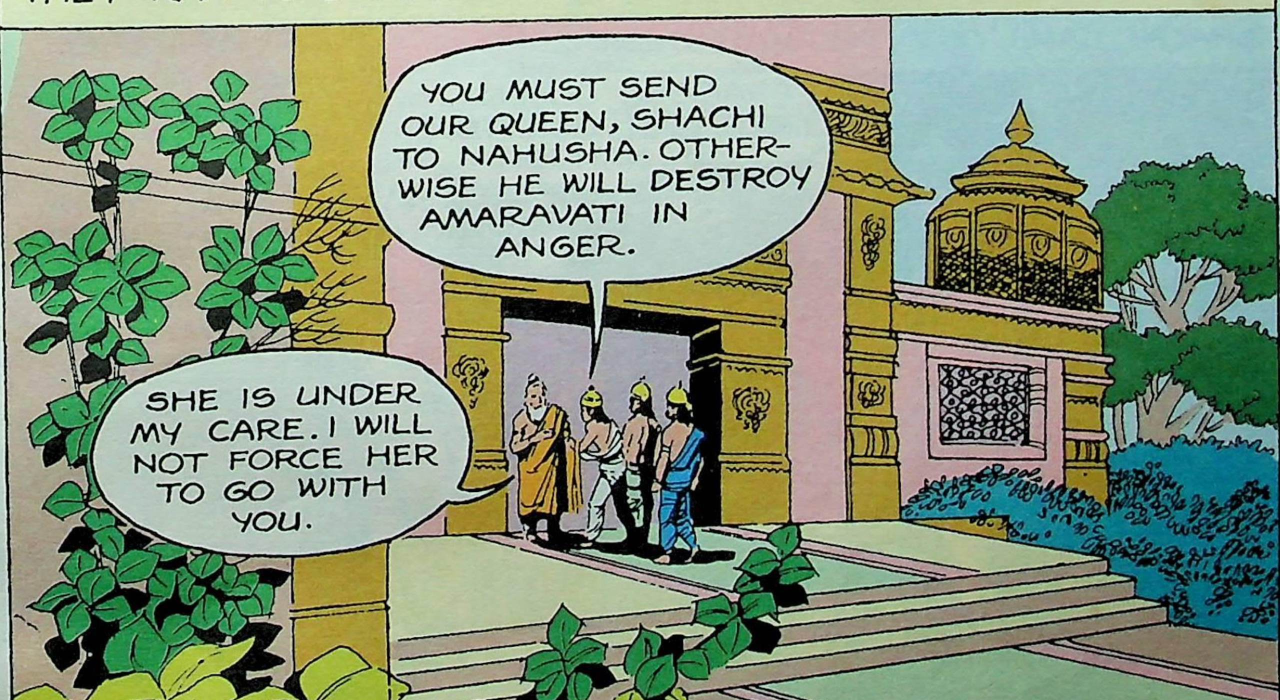
* THE GODS OF WIND.

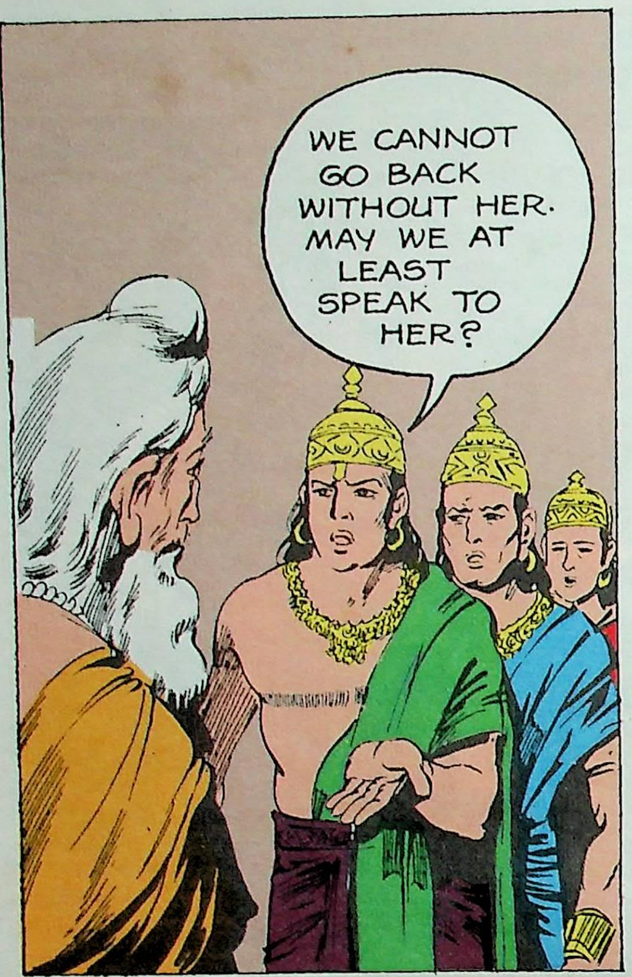

ONE DAY NAHUSHA SAW SHACHI IN THE PARK.
WHO IS THAT!
OUR QUEEN, SHACHI DEVI.
AS I AM THE KING HERE, SHE IS MY QUEEN.
GO AT ONCE AND BRING HER HERE!
DON'T DO THAT! SHE IS DEVOTED TO INDRA.
TERRIFIED, SHACHI RAN TO THE HOUSE OF BRIHASPATI, THE GURU OF THE DEVAS.
REVERED ONE, YOU KNOW I AM INDRA'S DEVOTED WIFE. SAVE ME FROM NAHUSHA.
DO NOT WORRY. YOU ARE SAFE HERE.

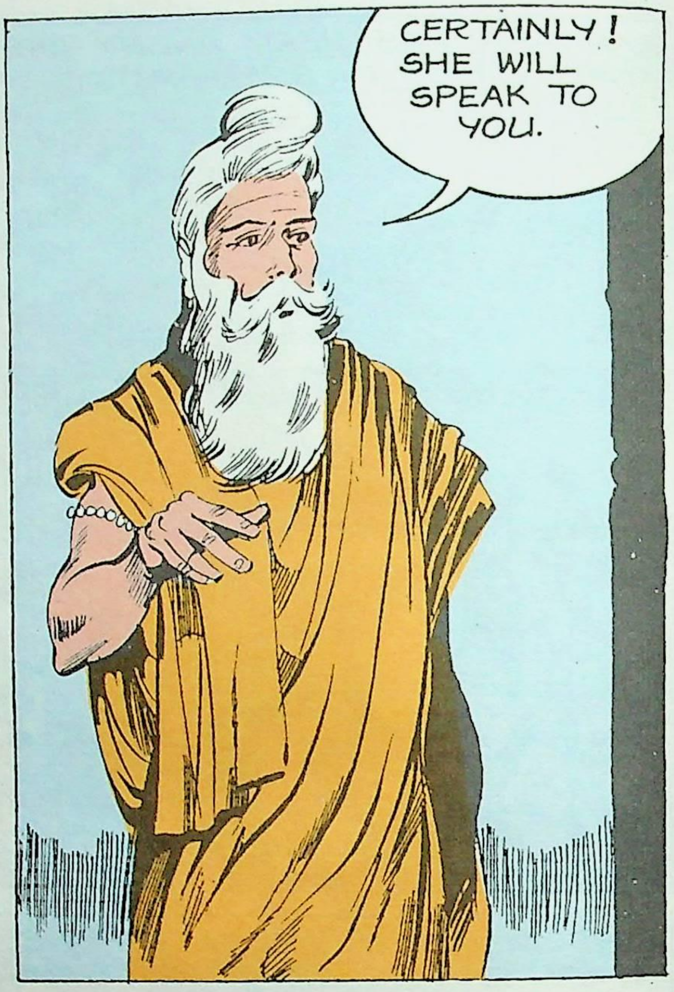
NAHUSHA WAS VERY ANGRY WHEN HE HEARD THAT SHACHI WAS IN BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.

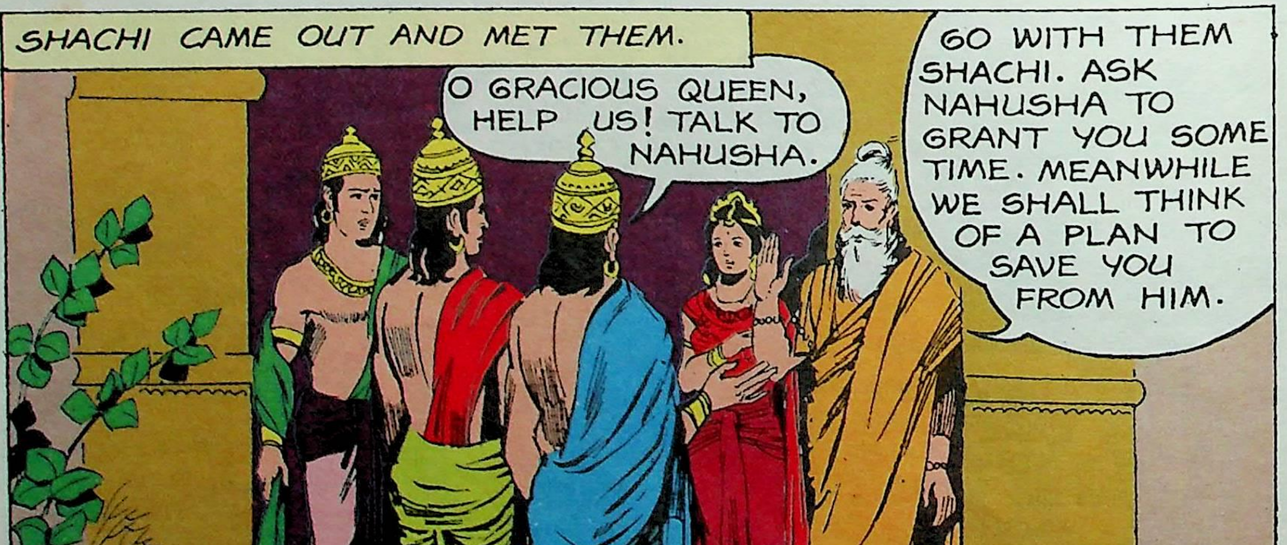

GO AT ONCE AND BRING HER HERE.
YES, SIR.

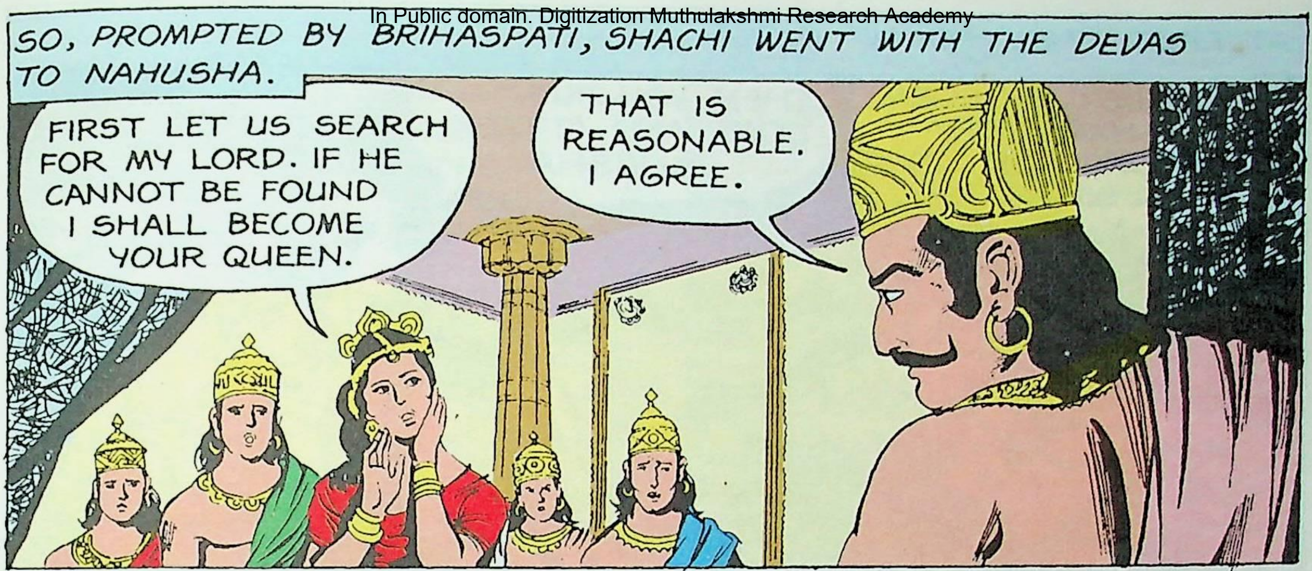
THE DEVAS TREMBLED BEFORE NAHUSHA'S FURY. THEY RAN TO BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.


YOU MUST SEND OUR QUEEN, SHACHI TO NAHUSHA. OTHERWISE HE WILL DESTROY AMARAVATI IN ANGER.
SHE IS UNDER MY CARE. I WILL NOT FORCE HER TO GO WITH YOU.


WE CANNOT GO BACK WITHOUT HER. MAY WE AT LEAST SPEAK TO HER?

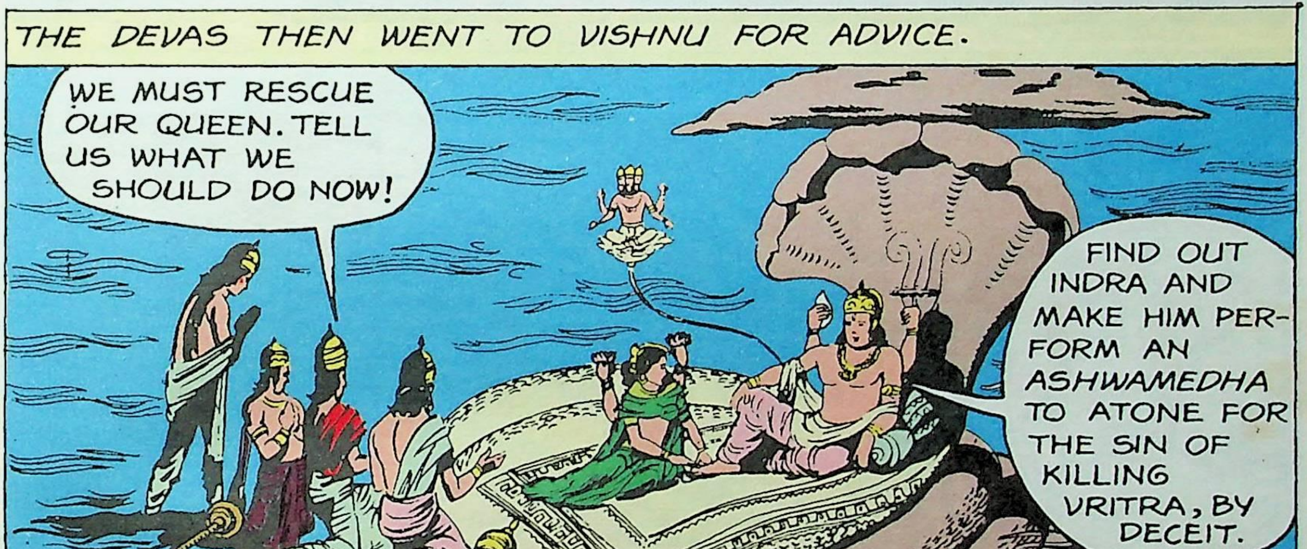

CERTAINLY! SHE WILL SPEAK TO YOU.


SHACHI CAME OUT AND MET THEM.
O GRACIOUS QUEEN, HELP US! TALK TO NAHUSHA.
GO WITH THEM SHACHI. ASK NAHUSHA TO GRANT YOU SOME TIME. MEANWHILE WE SHALL THINK OF A PLAN TO SAVE YOU FROM HIM.



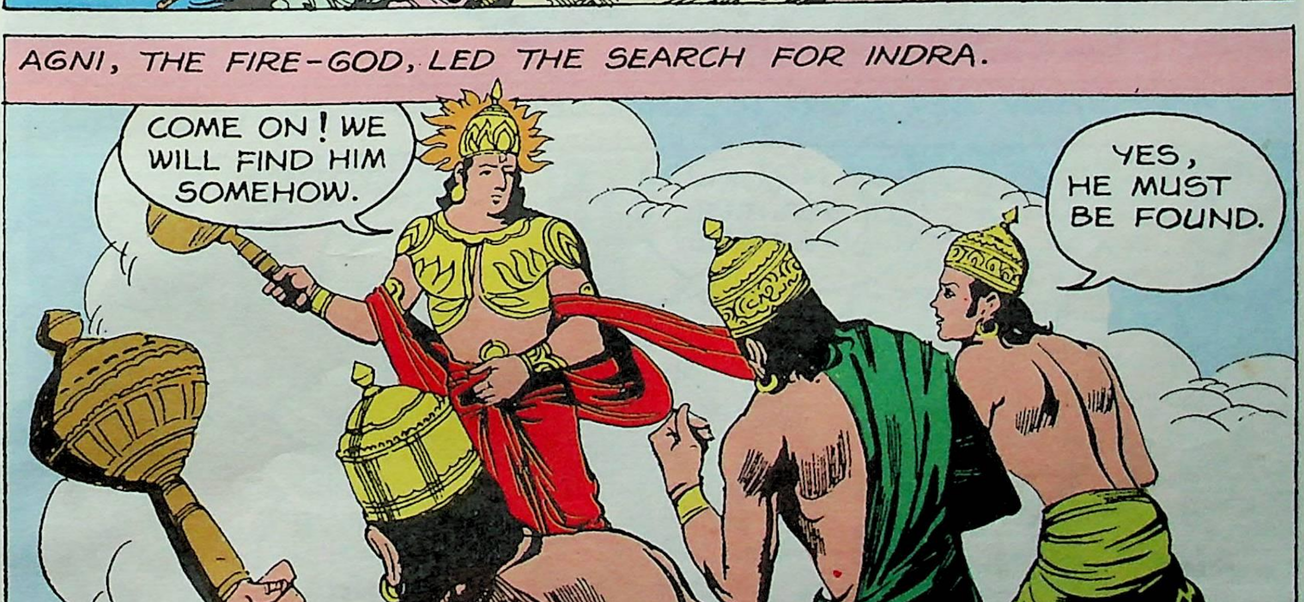
SO, PROMPTED BY BRIHASPATI, SHACHI WENT WITH THE DEVAS TO NAHUSHA.

FIRST LET US SEARCH FOR MY LORD. IF HE CANNOT BE FOUND I SHALL BECOME YOUR QUEEN.
THAT IS REASONABLE. I AGREE.



THE DEVAS THEN WENT TO VISHNU FOR ADVICE.

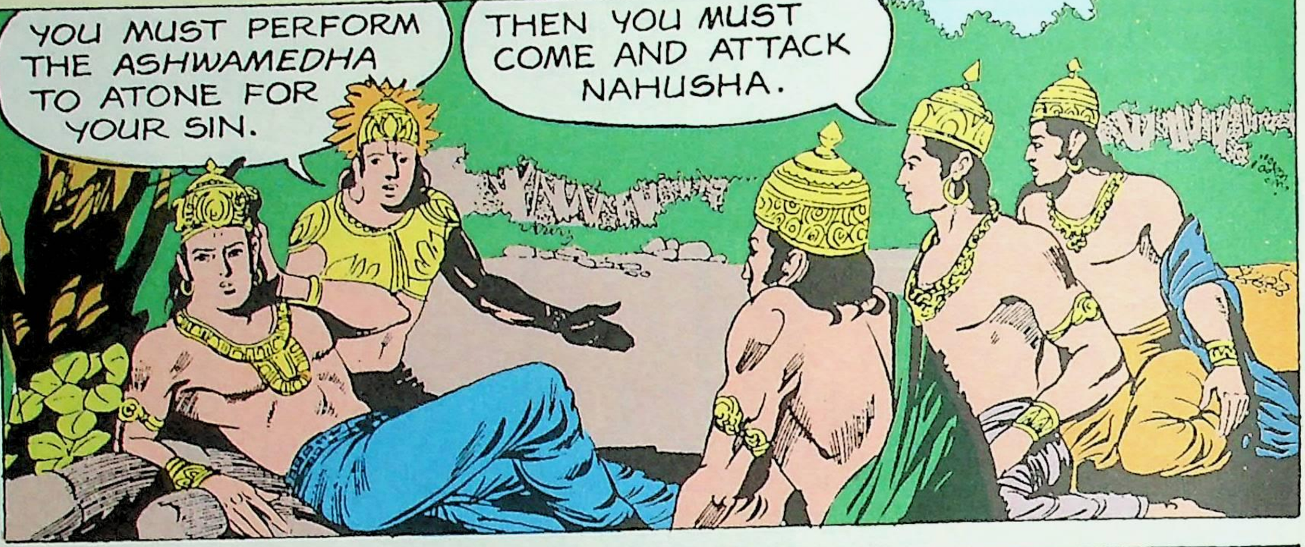
WE MUST RESCUE OUR QUEEN. TELL US WHAT WE SHOULD DO NOW!
FIND OUT INDRA AND MAKE HIM PERFORM AN ASHWAMEDHA TO ATONE FOR THE SIN OF KILLING VRITRA, BY DECEIT.



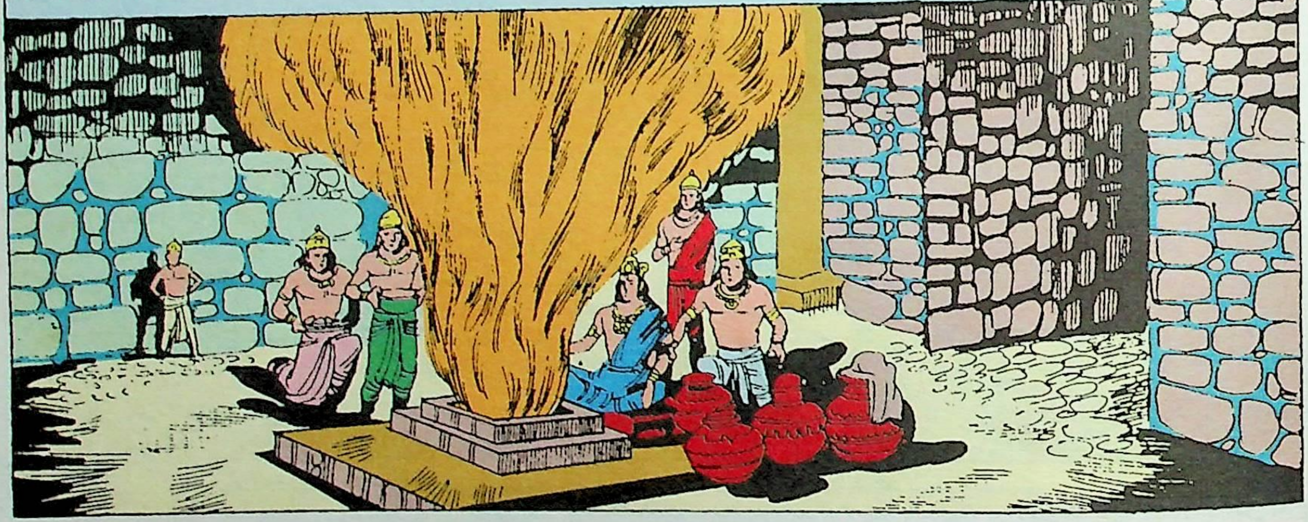
AGNI, THE FIRE-GOD, LED THE SEARCH FOR INDRA.

COME ON! WE WILL FIND HIM SOMEHOW.
YES, HE MUST BE FOUND.

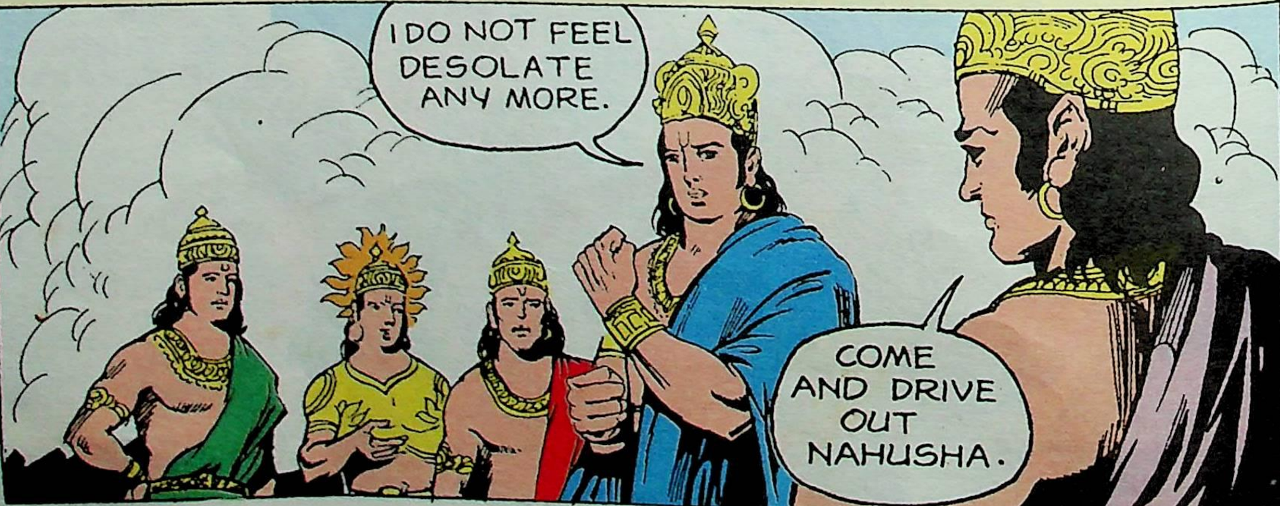
AT LAST THEY FOUND INDRA.

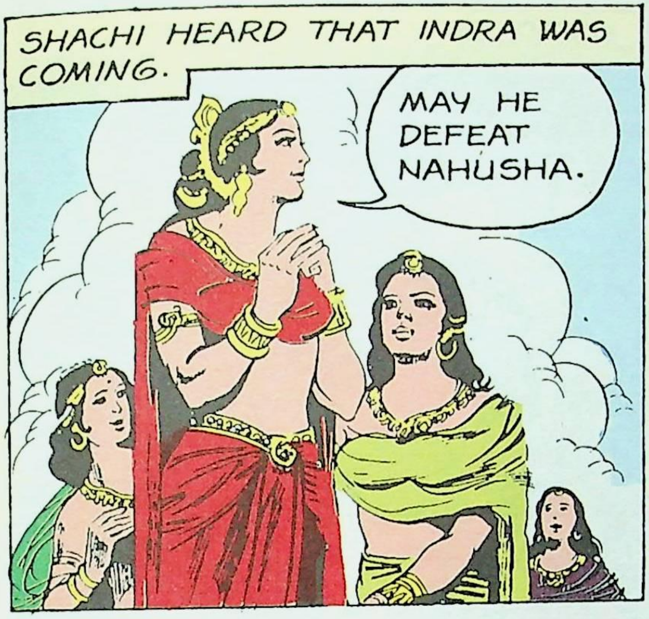

YOU MUST PERFORM THE ASHWAMEDHA TO ATONE FOR YOUR SIN.
THEN YOU MUST COME AND ATTACK NAHUSHA.

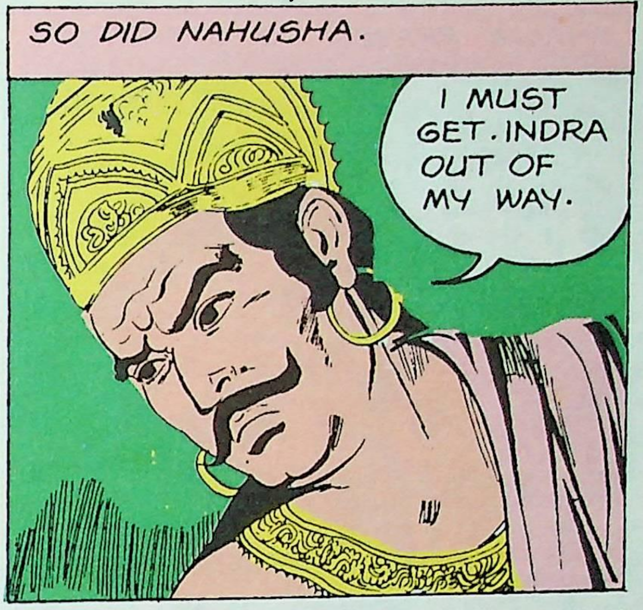
INDRA PERFORMED THE ASHWAMEDHA...

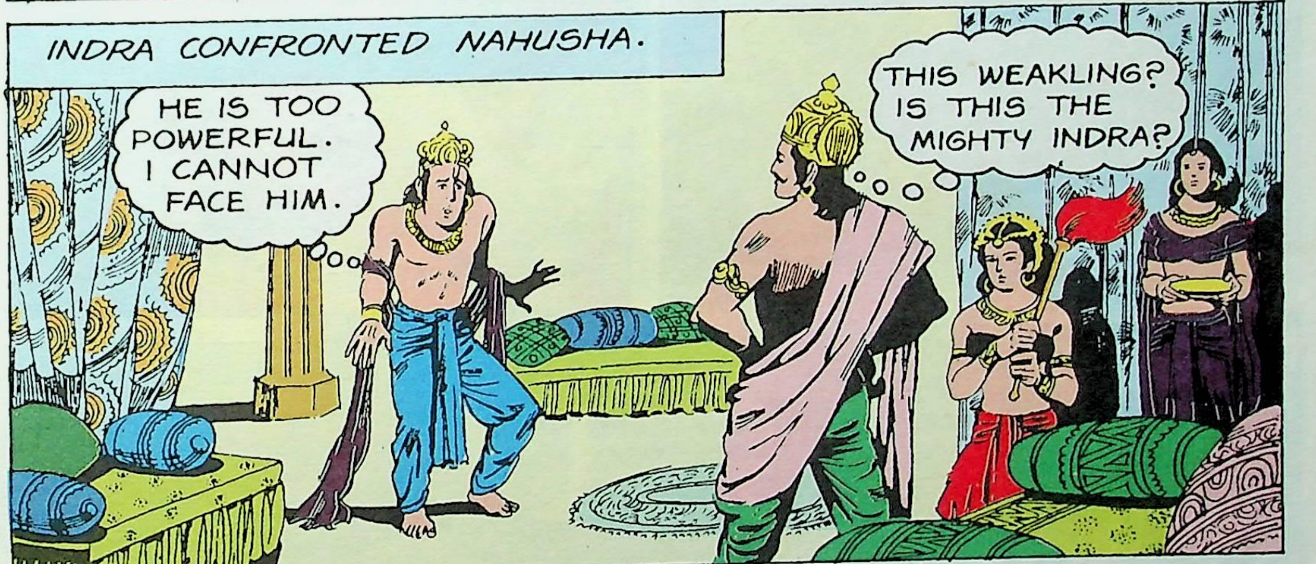


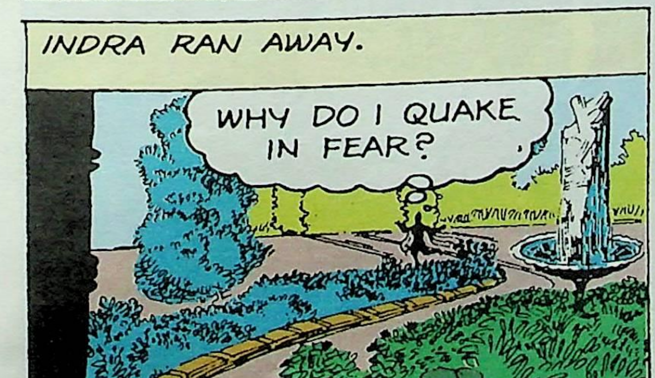
...AND THEN SET OUT TO CHALLENGE NAHUSHA.

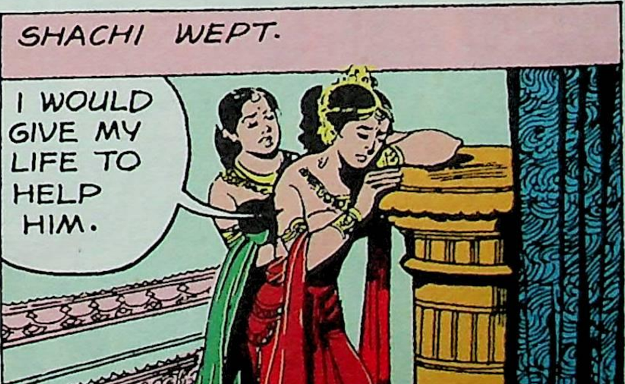

I DO NOT FEEL DESOLATE ANY MORE.
COME AND DRIVE OUT NAHUSHA.


SHACHI HEARD THAT INDRA WAS COMING.
MAY HE DEFEAT NAHUSHA.

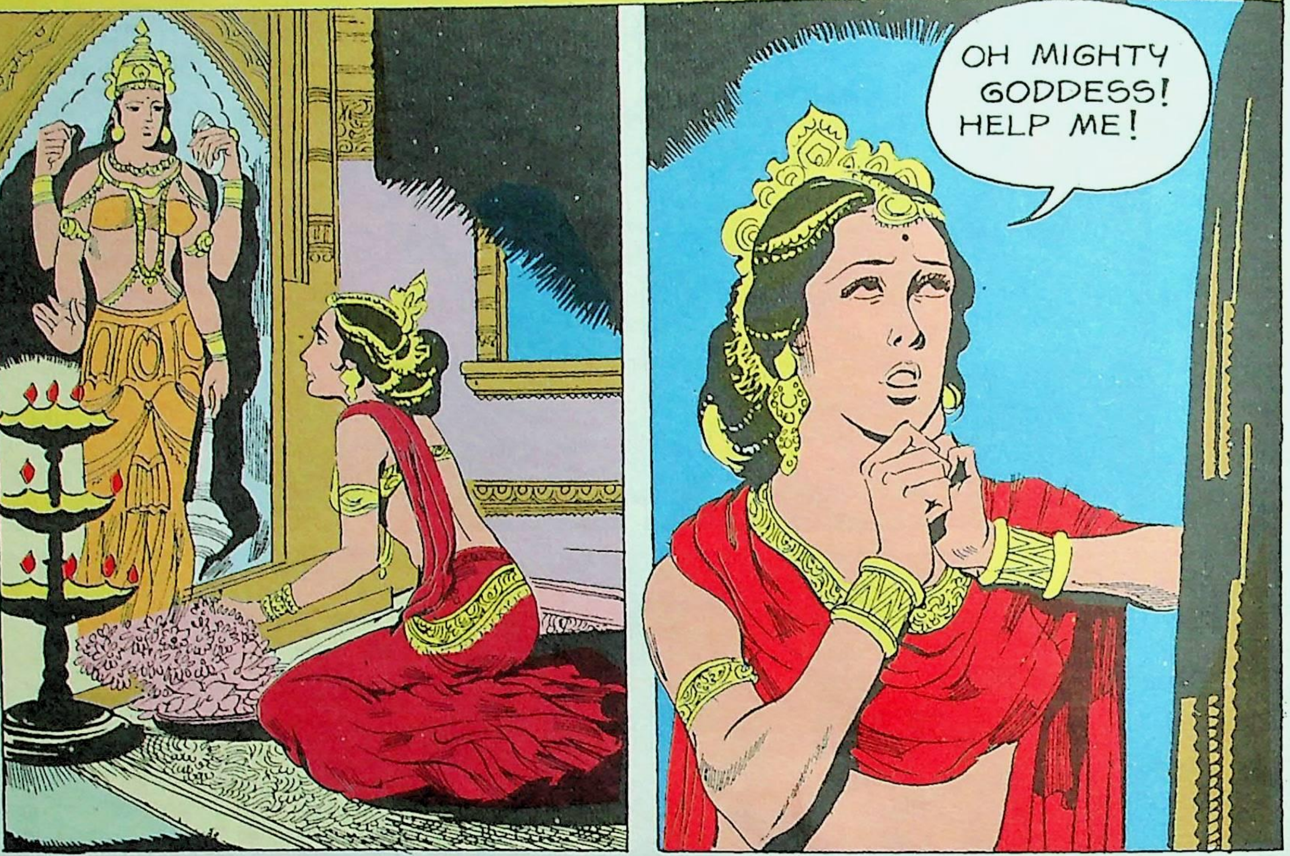

SO DID NAHUSHA.
I MUST GET. INDRA OUT OF MY WAY.


INDRA CONFRONTED NAHUSHA.
HE IS TOO POWERFUL. I CANNOT FACE HIM.
THIS WEAKLING? IS THIS THE MIGHTY INDRA?

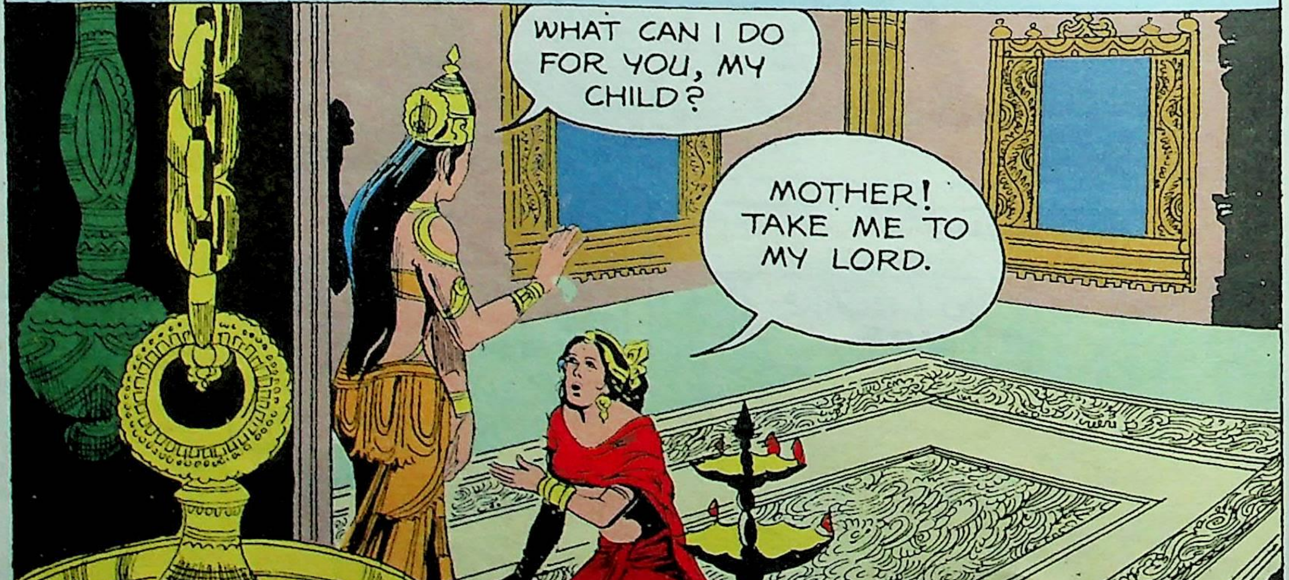

INDRA RAN AWAY.
WHY DO I QUAKE IN FEAR?

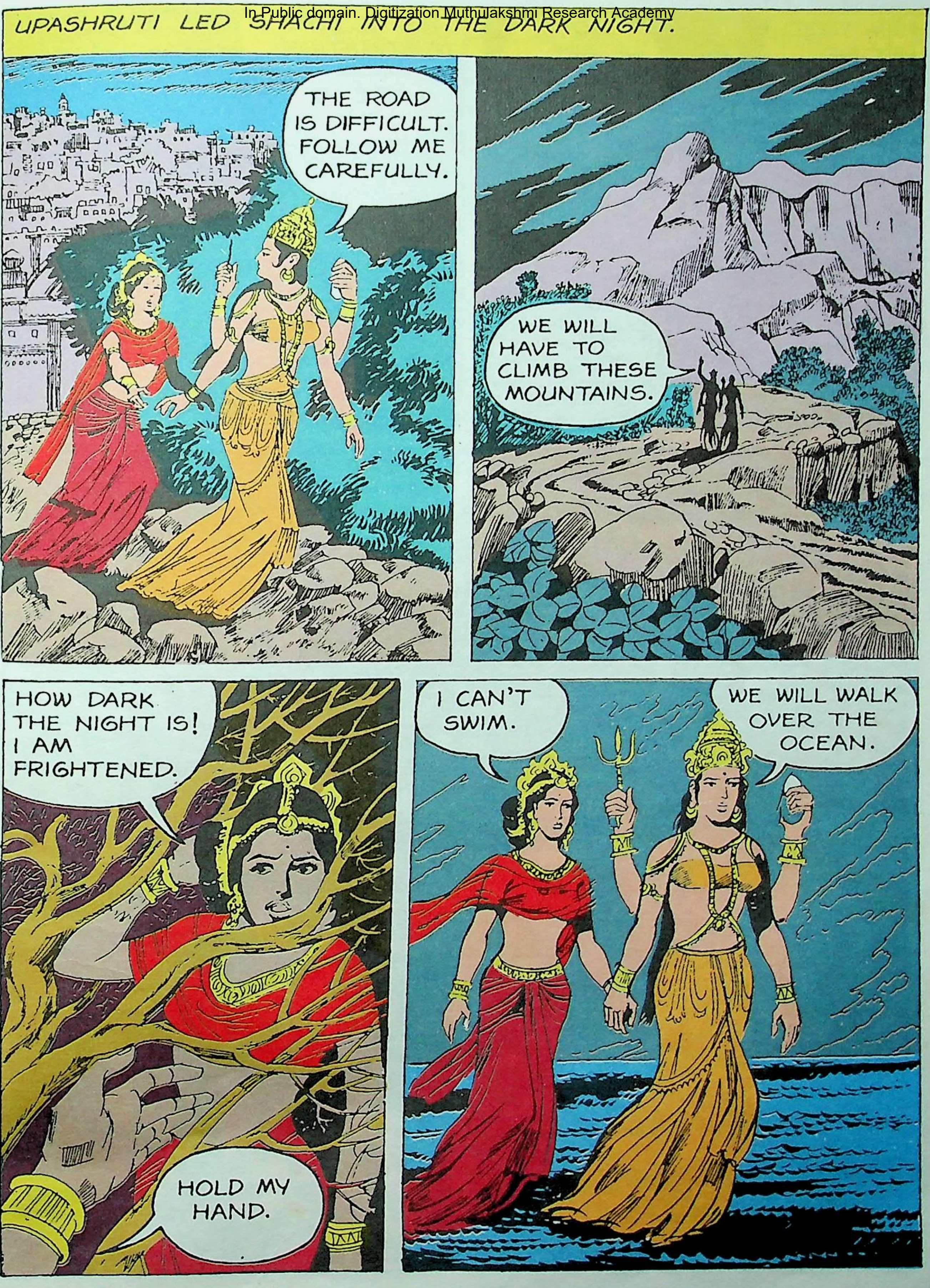

SHACHI WEPT.
I WOULD GIVE MY LIFE TO HELP HIM.

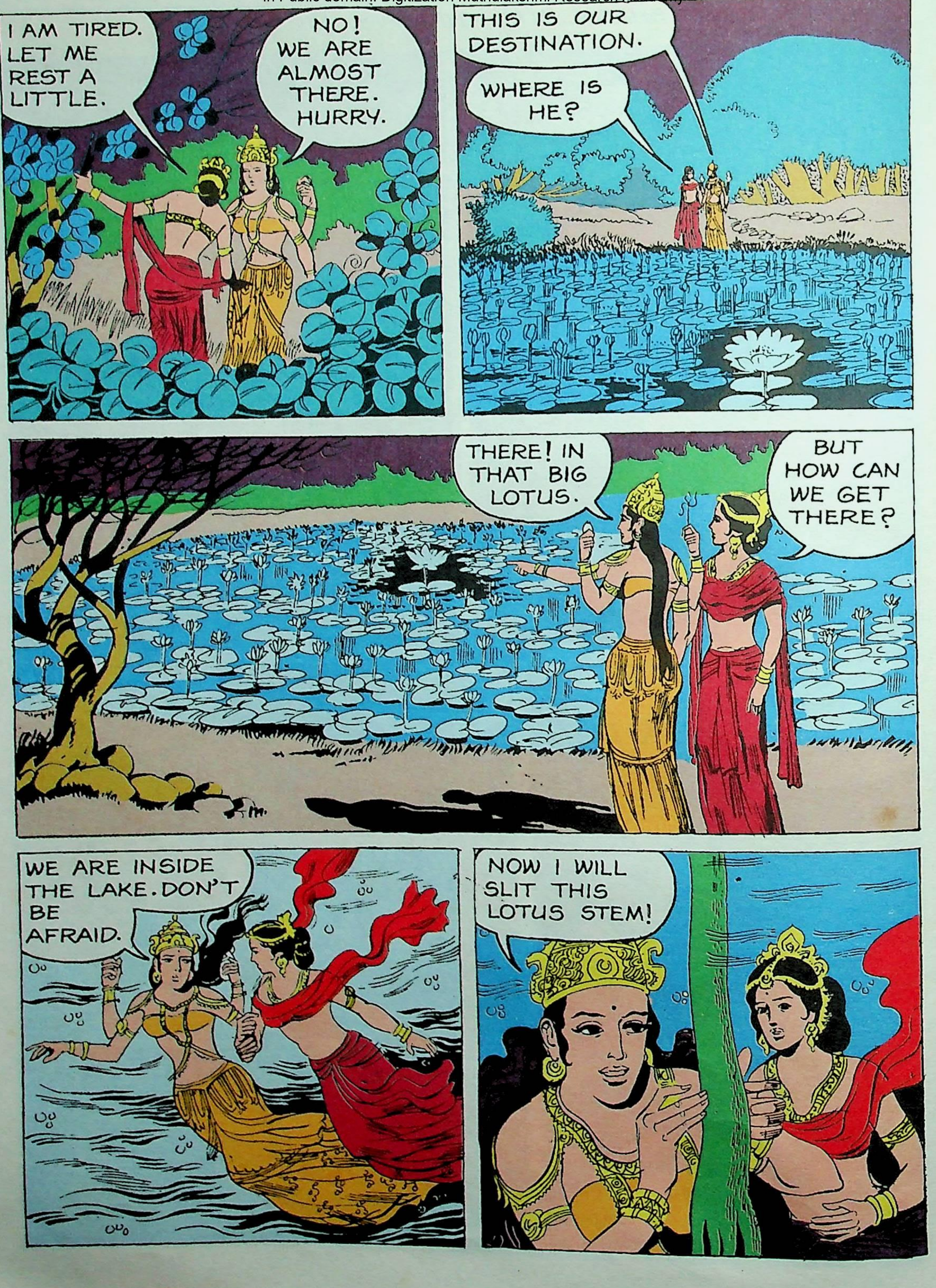
SHACHI PRAYED TO UPASHRUTI, A GODDESS OF THE NIGHT.

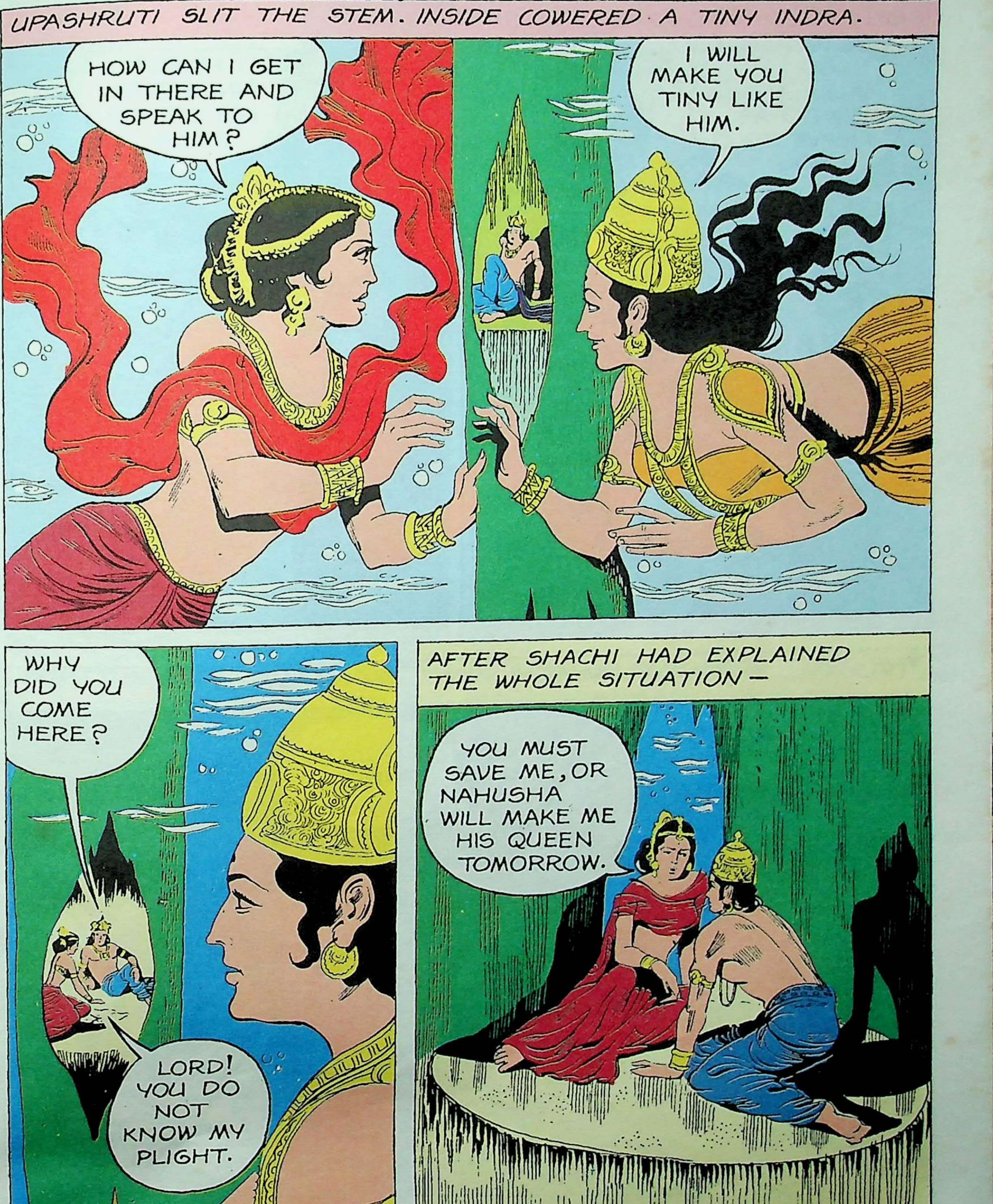

OH MIGHTY GODDESS! HELP ME!

UPASHRUTI APPEARED BEFORE SHACHI.

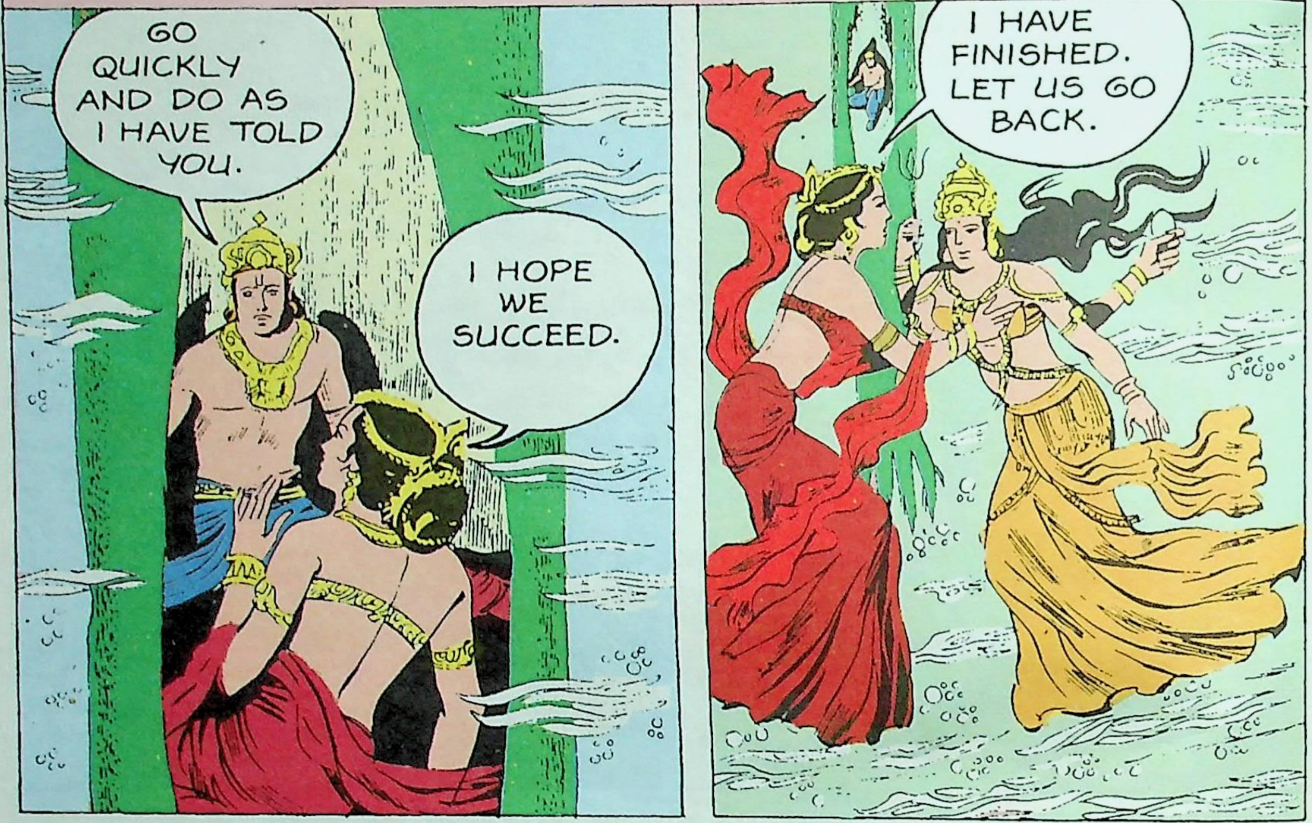

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY CHILD?
MOTHER! TAKE ME TO MY LORD.


UPASHRUTI LED SHACHI INTO THE DARK NIGHT.
THE ROAD IS DIFFICULT. FOLLOW ME CAREFULLY.
WE WILL HAVE TO CLIMB THESE MOUNTAINS.
HOW DARK THE NIGHT IS! I AM FRIGHTENED.
HOLD MY HAND.
I CAN'T SWIM.
WE WILL WALK OVER THE OCEAN.

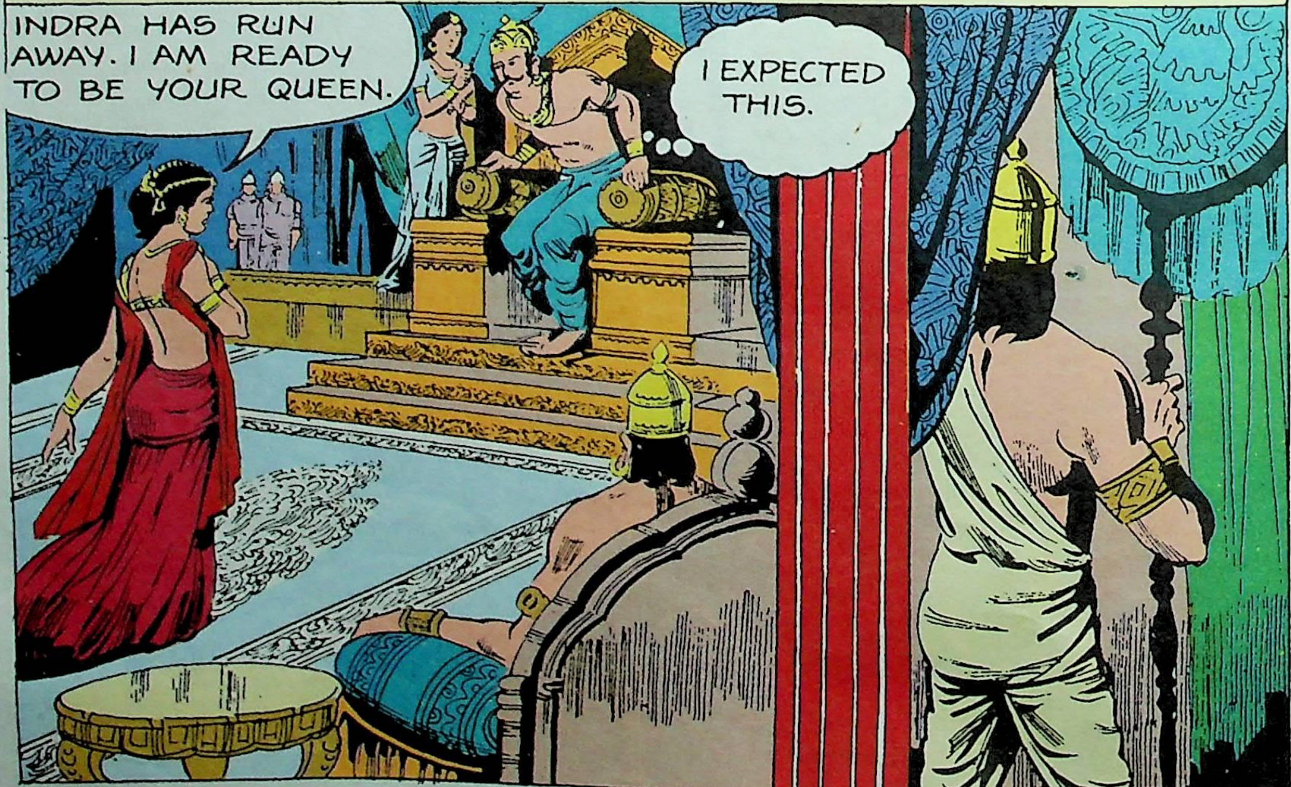

I AM TIRED. LET ME REST A LITTLE.
NO! WE ARE ALMOST THERE. HURRY.
THIS IS OUR DESTINATION.
WHERE IS HE?
THERE! IN THAT BIG LOTUS.
BUT HOW CAN WE GET THERE?
WE ARE INSIDE THE LAKE. DON'T BE AFRAID.
NOW I WILL SLIT THIS LOTUS STEM!

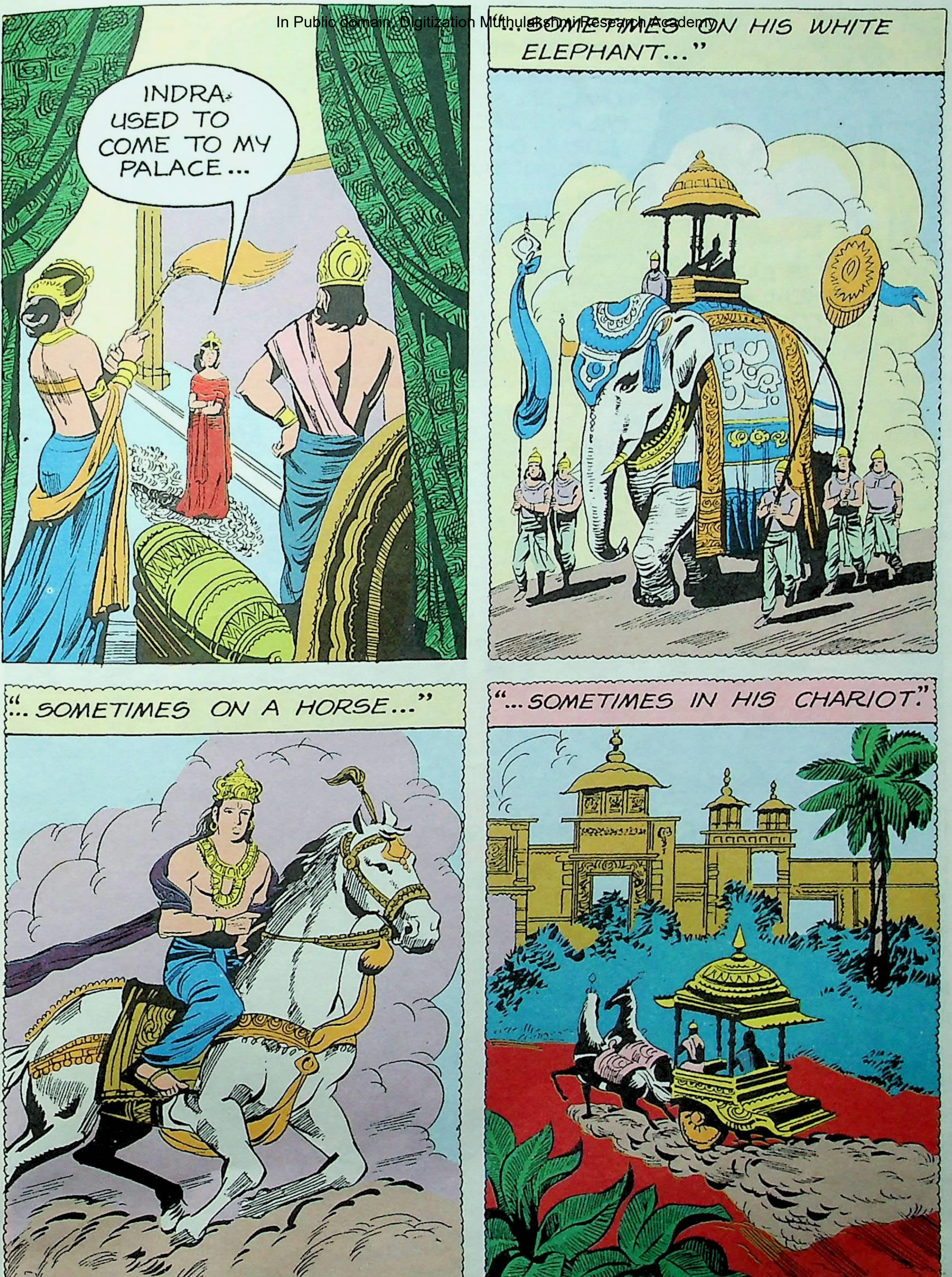

UPASHRUTI SLIT THE STEM. INSIDE COWERED A TINY INDRA.
HOW CAN I GET IN THERE AND SPEAK TO HIM?
I WILL MAKE YOU TINY LIKE HIM.
WHY DID YOU COME HERE?
LORD! YOU DO NOT KNOW MY PLIGHT.
AFTER SHACHI HAD EXPLAINED THE WHOLE SITUATION—
YOU MUST SAVE ME, OR NAHUSHA WILL MAKE ME HIS QUEEN TOMORROW.

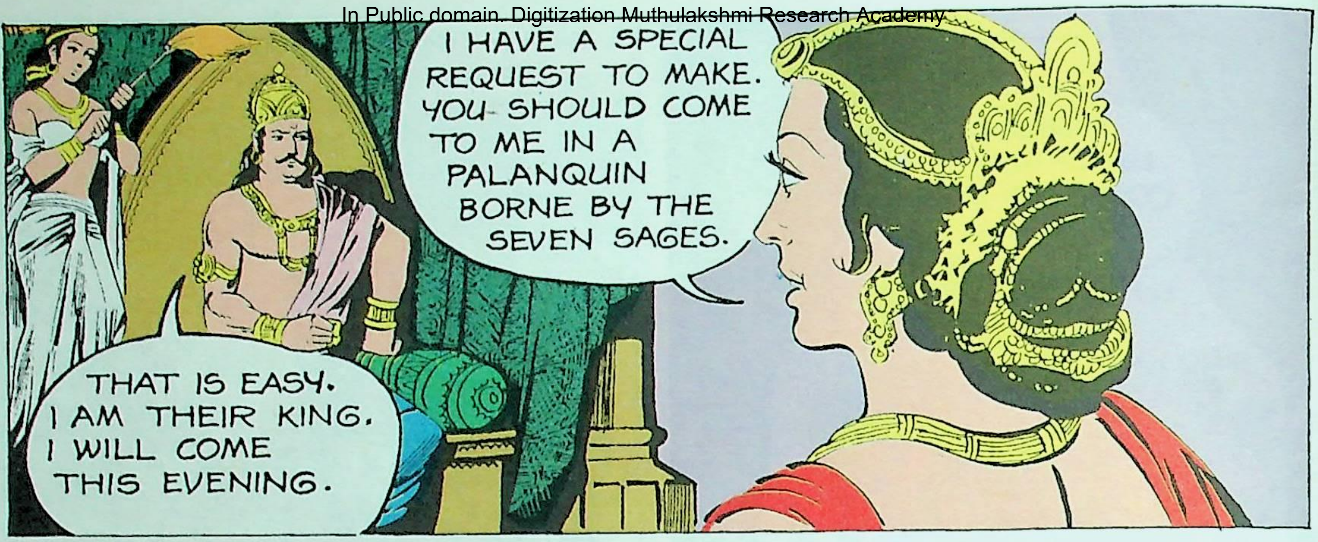
INDRA TOLD HER WHAT SHE SHOULD DO.

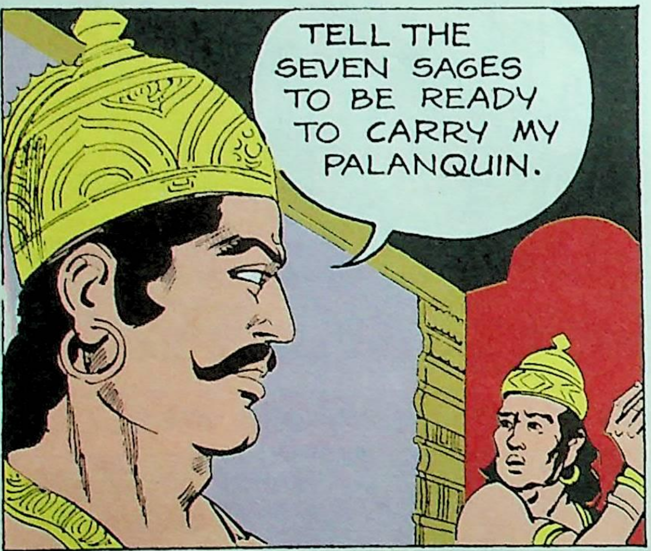

GO QUICKLY AND DO AS I HAVE TOLD YOU.
I HOPE WE SUCCEED.
I HAVE FINISHED. LET US GO BACK.

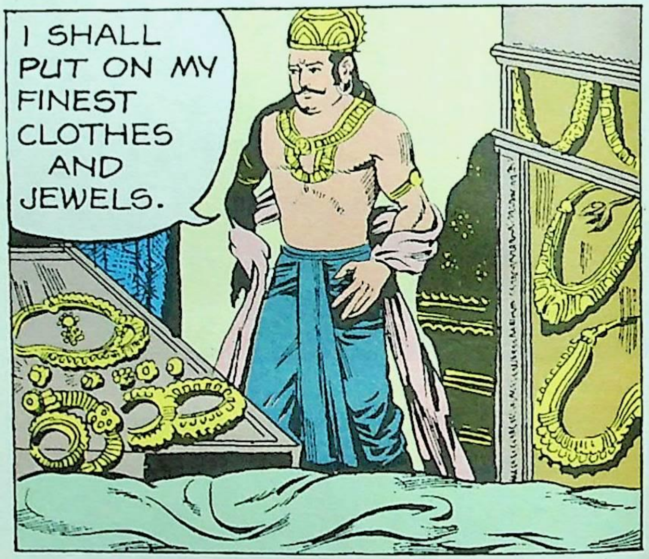
THE NEXT MORNING SHACHI WENT TO NAHUSHA.


INDRA HAS RUN AWAY. I AM READY TO BE YOUR QUEEN.
I EXPECTED THIS.

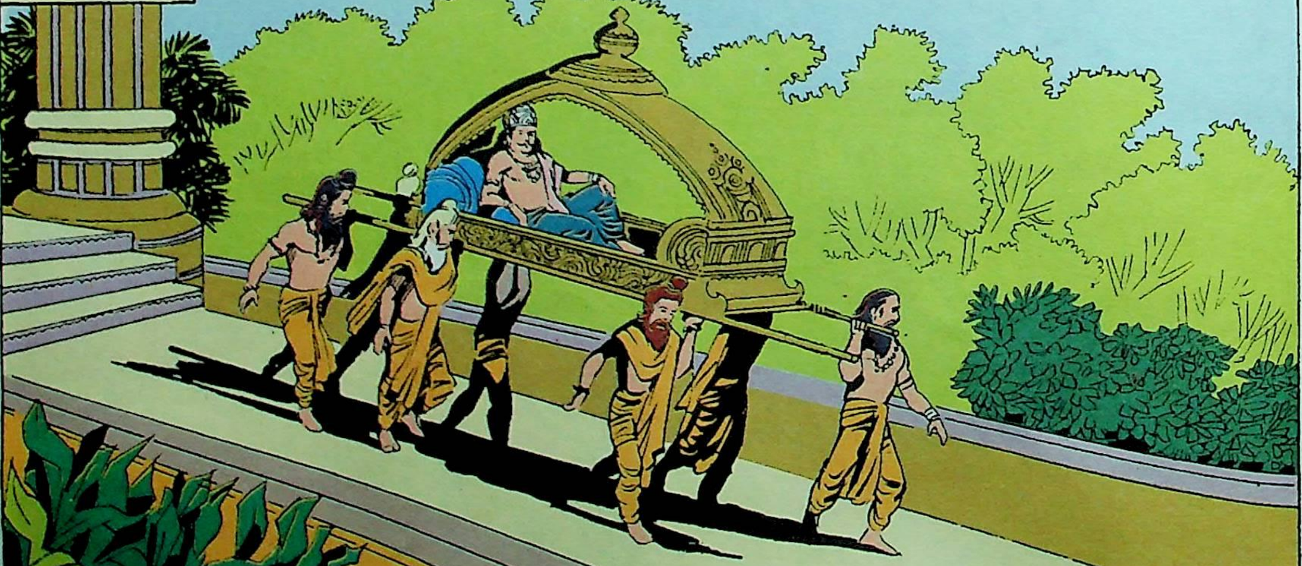

INDRA USED TO COME TO MY PALACE...
"...SOMETIMES ON HIS WHITE ELEPHANT..."
"...SOMETIMES ON A HORSE..."
"...SOMETIMES IN HIS CHARIOT."

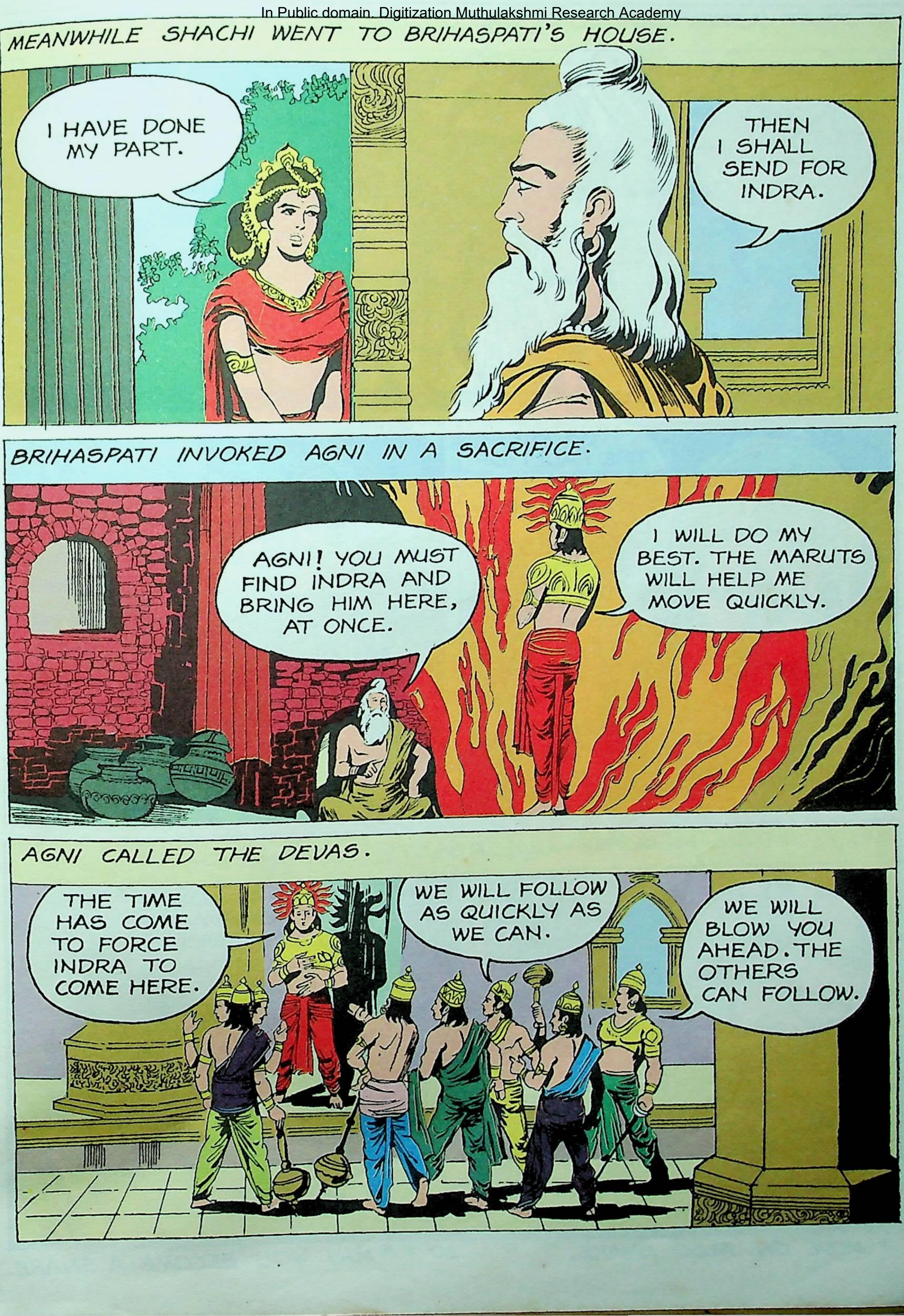

I HAVE A SPECIAL REQUEST TO MAKE. YOU SHOULD COME TO ME IN A PALANQUIN BORNE BY THE SEVEN SAGES.
THAT IS EASY. I AM THEIR KING. I WILL COME THIS EVENING.

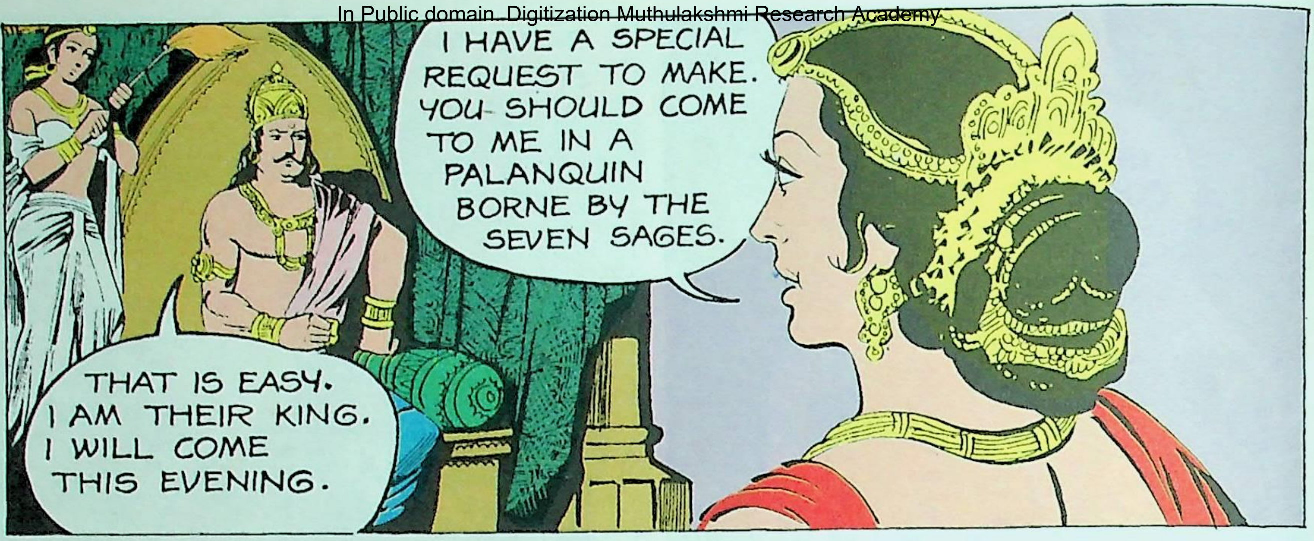

TELL THE SEVEN SAGES TO BE READY TO CARRY MY PALANQUIN.

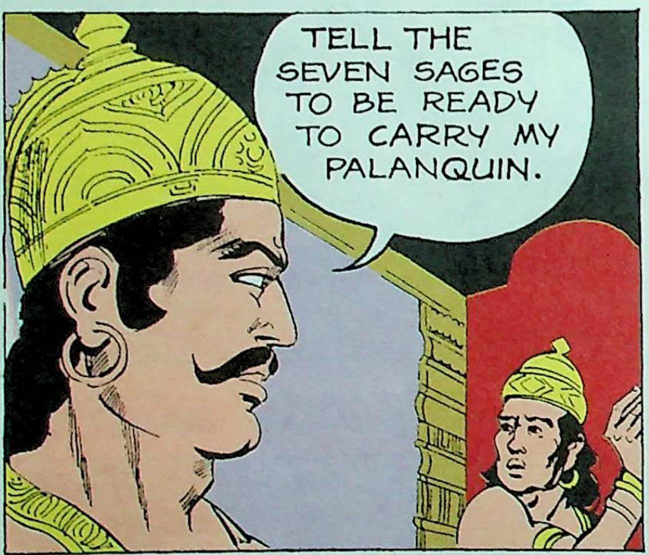

I SHALL PUT ON MY FINEST CLOTHES AND JEWELS.

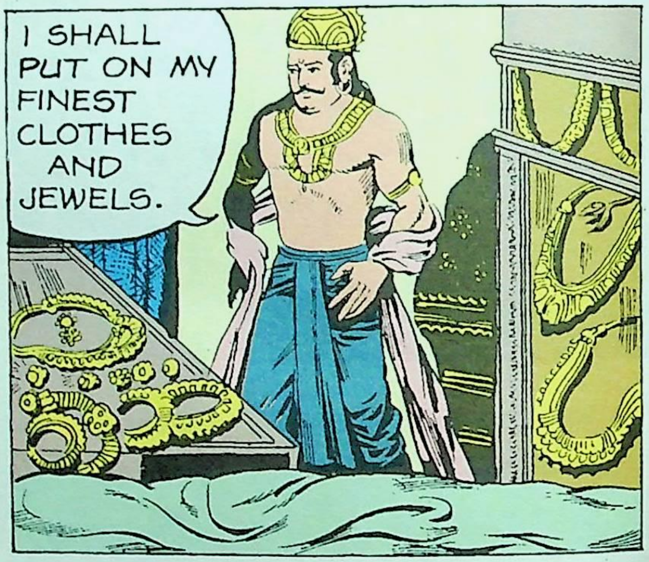
NAHUSHA SET OUT IN THE PALANQUIN BORNE BY THE SEVEN SAGES.



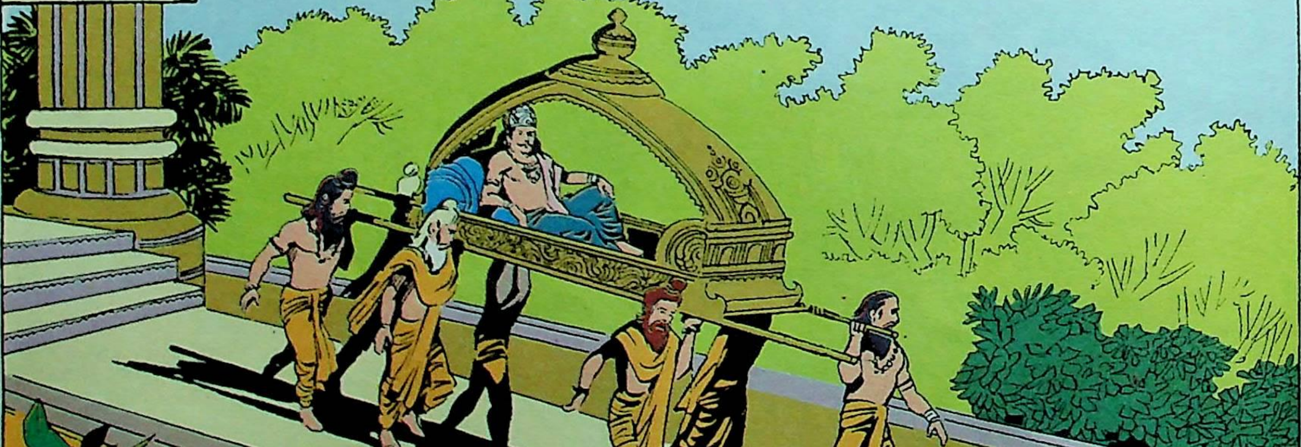

MEANWHILE SHACHI WENT TO BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.
I HAVE DONE MY PART.
THEN I SHALL SEND FOR INDRA.
BRIHASPATI INVOKED AGNI IN A SACRIFICE.
AGNI! YOU MUST FIND INDRA AND BRING HIM HERE, AT ONCE.
I WILL DO MY BEST. THE MARUTS WILL HELP ME MOVE QUICKLY.
AGNI CALLED THE DEVAS.
THE TIME HAS COME TO FORCE INDRA TO COME HERE.
WE WILL FOLLOW AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN.
WE WILL BLOW YOU AHEAD. THE OTHERS CAN FOLLOW.


I HAVE A SPECIAL REQUEST TO MAKE. YOU SHOULD COME TO ME IN A PALANQUIN BORNE BY THE SEVEN SAGES.
THAT IS EASY. I AM THEIR KING. I WILL COME THIS EVENING.

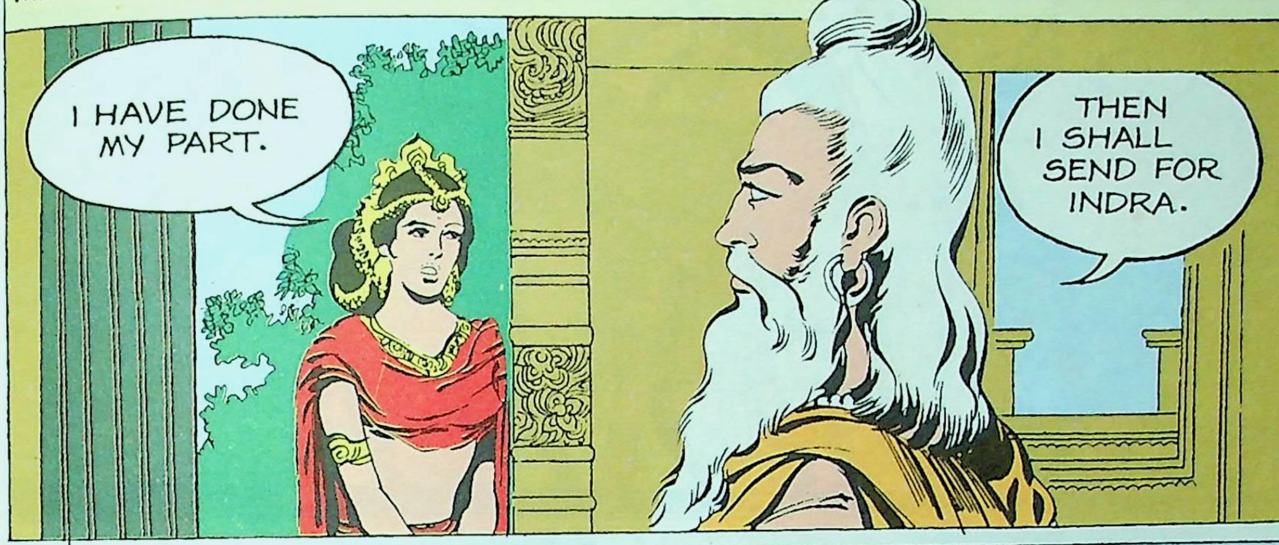

TELL THE SEVEN SAGES TO BE READY TO CARRY MY PALANQUIN.


I SHALL PUT ON MY FINEST CLOTHES AND JEWELS.

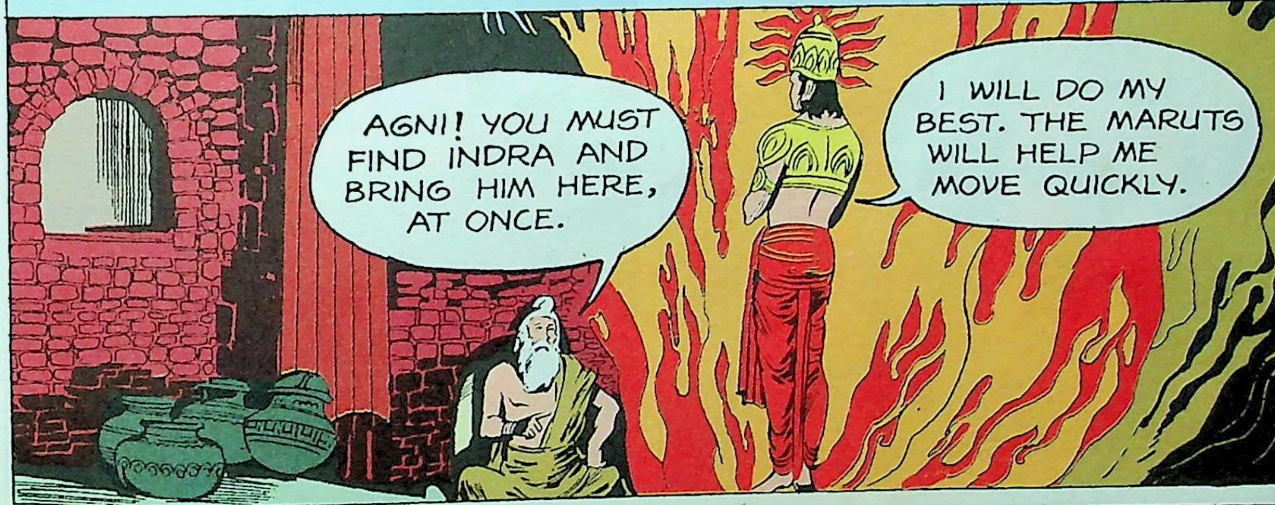
NAHUSHA SET OUT IN THE PALANQUIN BORNE BY THE SEVEN SAGES.



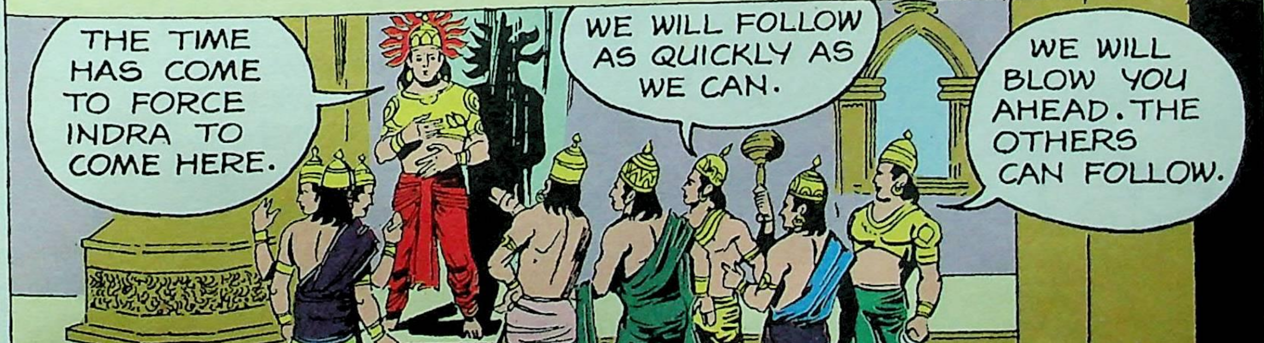
MEANWHILE SHACHI WENT TO BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.

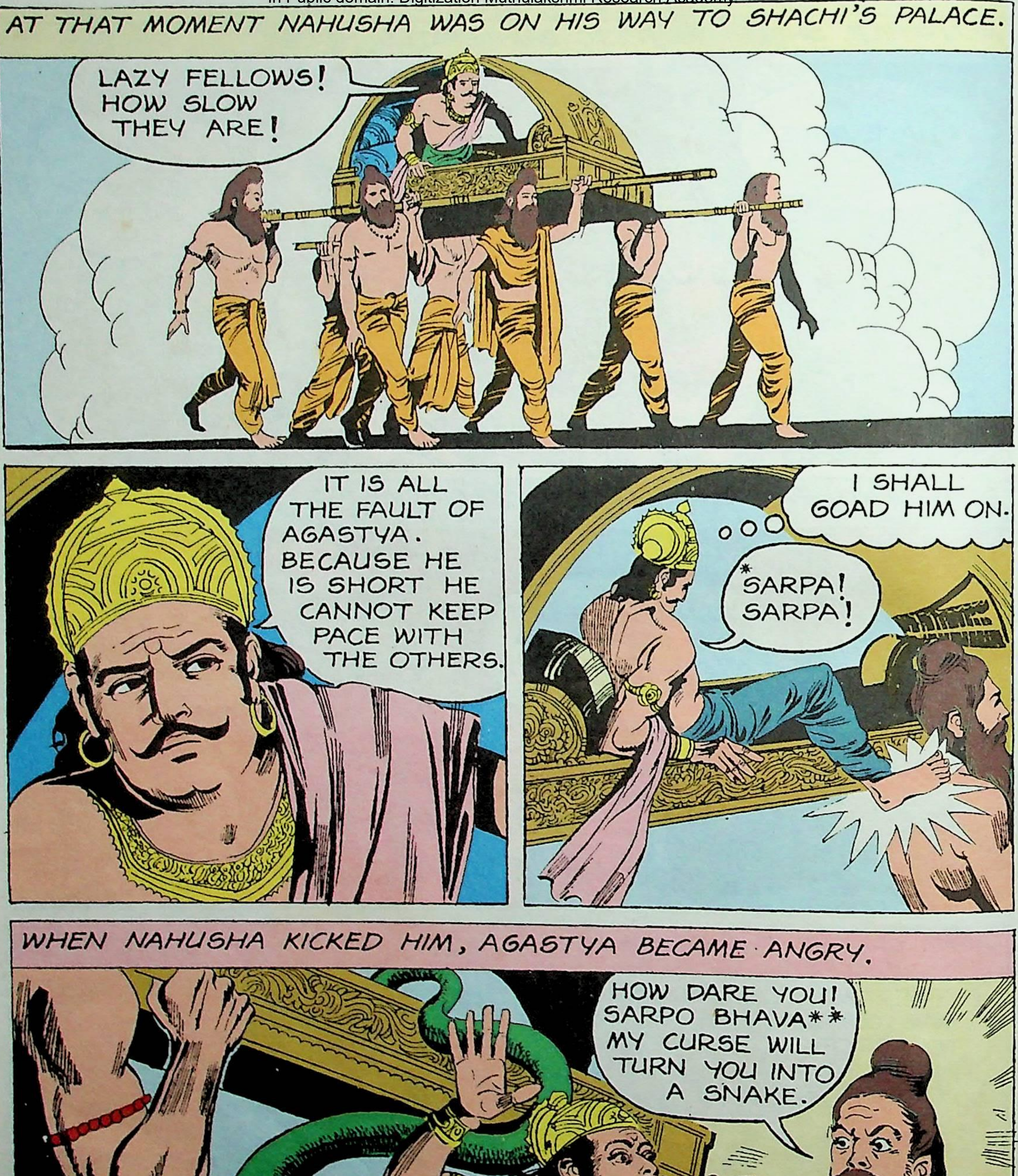

I HAVE DONE MY PART.
THEN I SHALL SEND FOR INDRA.

BRIHASPATI INVOKED AGNI IN A SACRIFICE.


AGNI! YOU MUST FIND INDRA AND BRING HIM HERE, AT ONCE.
I WILL DO MY BEST. THE MARUTS WILL HELP ME MOVE QUICKLY.

AGNI CALLED THE DEVAS.

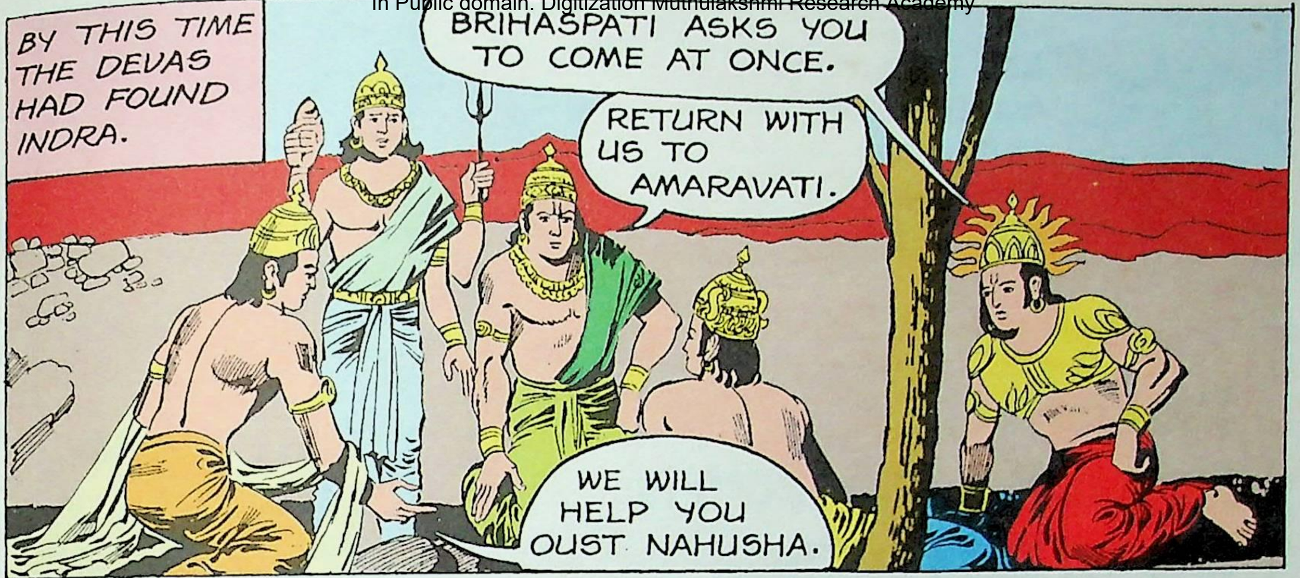

THE TIME HAS COME TO FORCE INDRA TO COME HERE.
WE WILL FOLLOW AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN.
WE WILL BLOW YOU AHEAD. THE OTHERS CAN FOLLOW.


AT THAT MOMENT NAHUSHA WAS ON HIS WAY TO SHACHI'S PALACE.
LAZY FELLOWS! HOW SLOW THEY ARE!
IT IS ALL THE FAULT OF AGASTYA. BECAUSE HE IS SHORT HE CANNOT KEEP PACE WITH THE OTHERS.
I SHALL GOAD HIM ON.
*SARPA! SARPA!
WHEN NAHUSHA KICKED HIM, AGASTYA BECAME ANGRY.
HOW DARE YOU! SARPO BHAVA** MY CURSE WILL TURN YOU INTO A SNAKE.

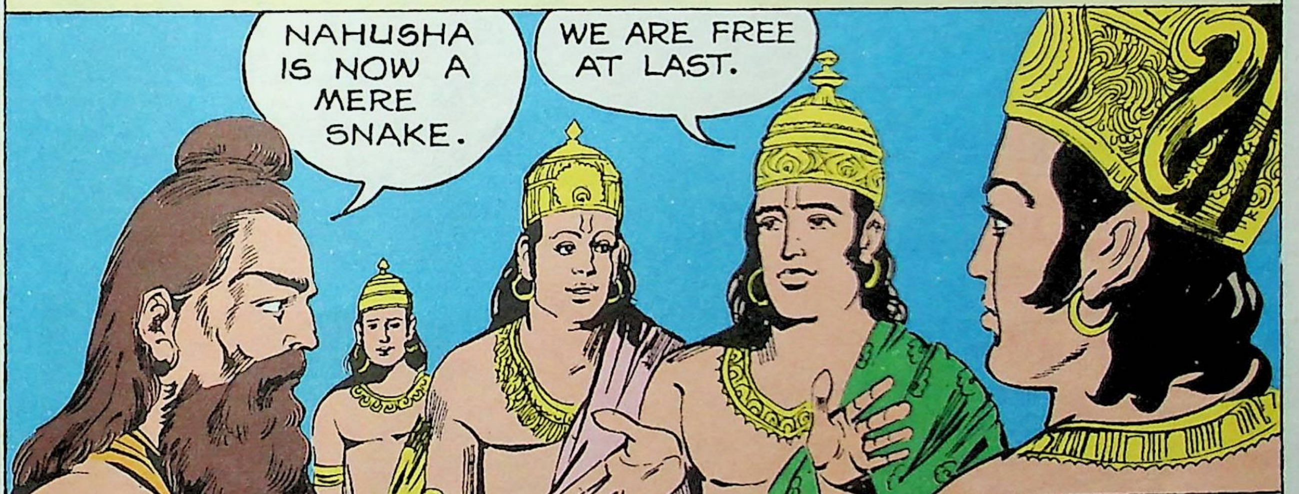
---

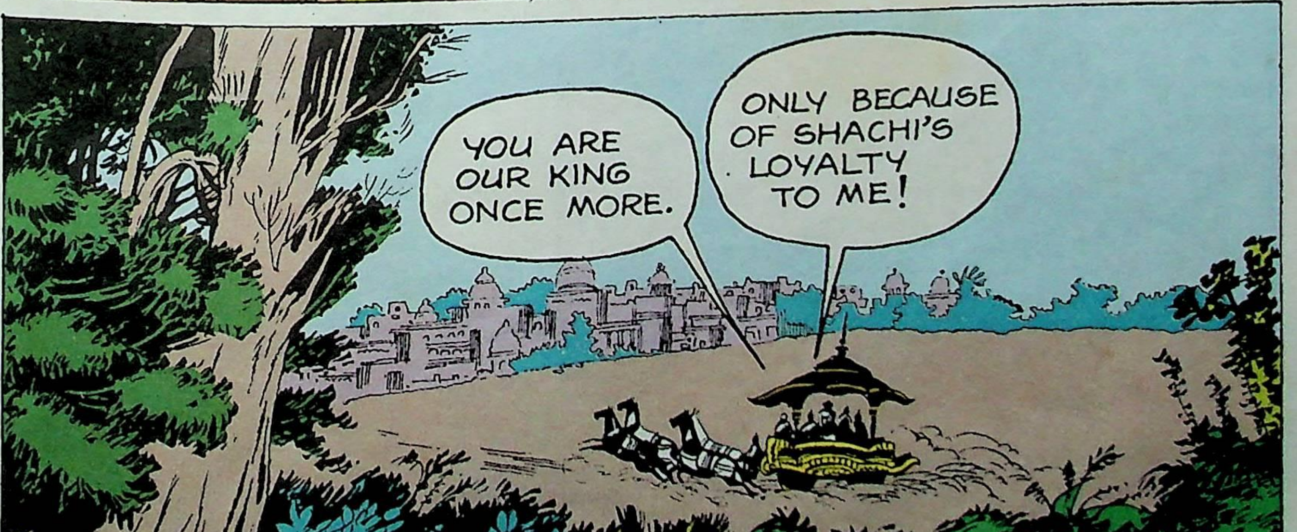
* MOVE ON. ALSO SNAKE.

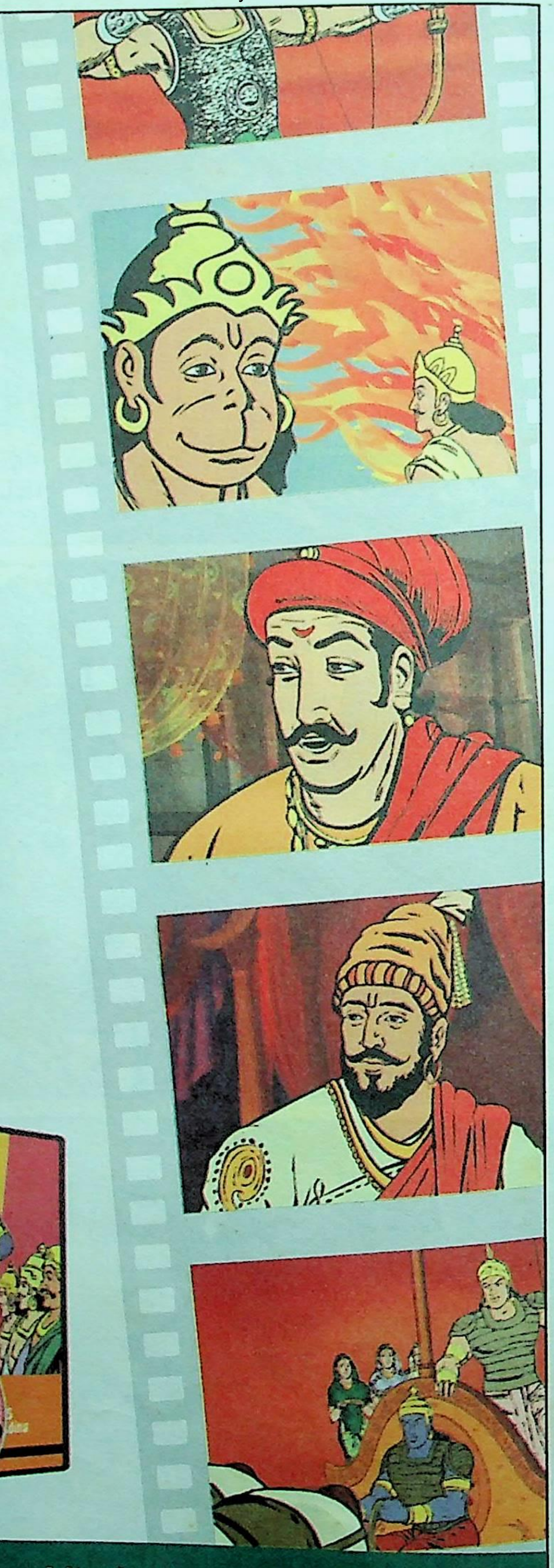
** MAY YOU BECOME A SNAKE.


BY THIS TIME THE DEVAS HAD FOUND INDRA.
BRIHASPATI ASKS YOU TO COME AT ONCE.
RETURN WITH US TO AMARAVATI.
WE WILL HELP YOU OUST NAHUSHA.

JUST THEN AGASTYA CAME HURRYING UP.


NAHUSHA IS NOW A MERE SNAKE.
WE ARE FREE AT LAST.


YOU ARE OUR KING ONCE MORE.
ONLY BECAUSE OF SHACHI'S LOYALTY TO ME!



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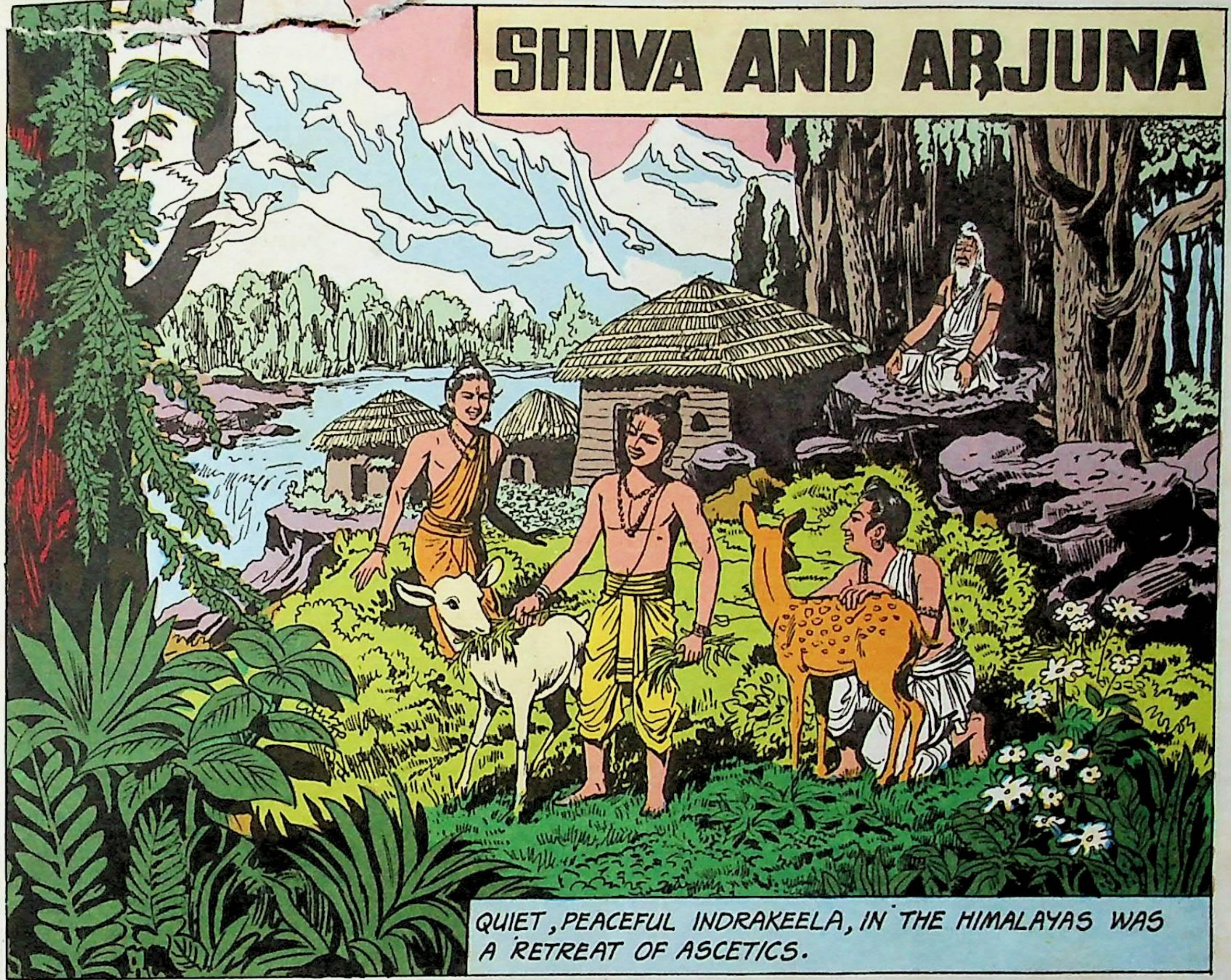
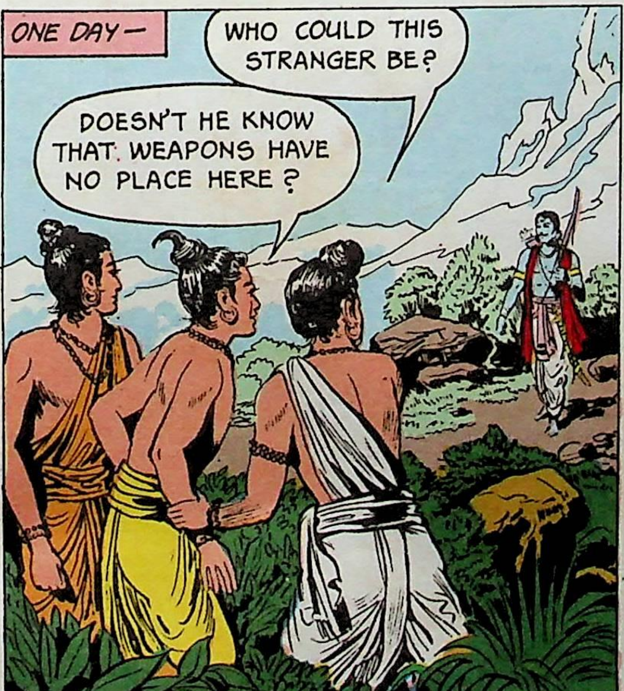
TALES OF SHIVA

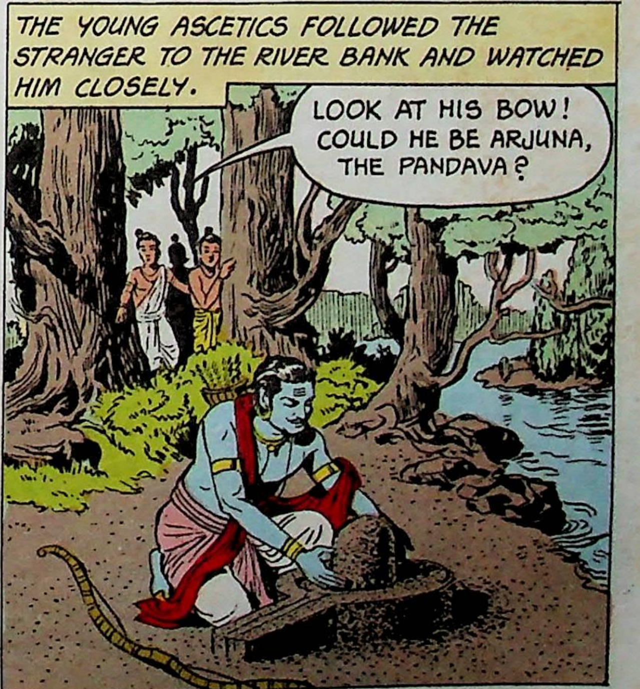
From his snowy abode on Mount Kailasa Lord Shiva travelled far and wide, answering the prayers of his devotees. But he was often in disguise to ensure that his favours went only to the deserving. And so it was that he battled with the dauntless Pandava Arjuna, cast his net into the sea as he mingled with humble fisherfolk, and emerged from the sand to kick aside even the mighty Yama, god of death.

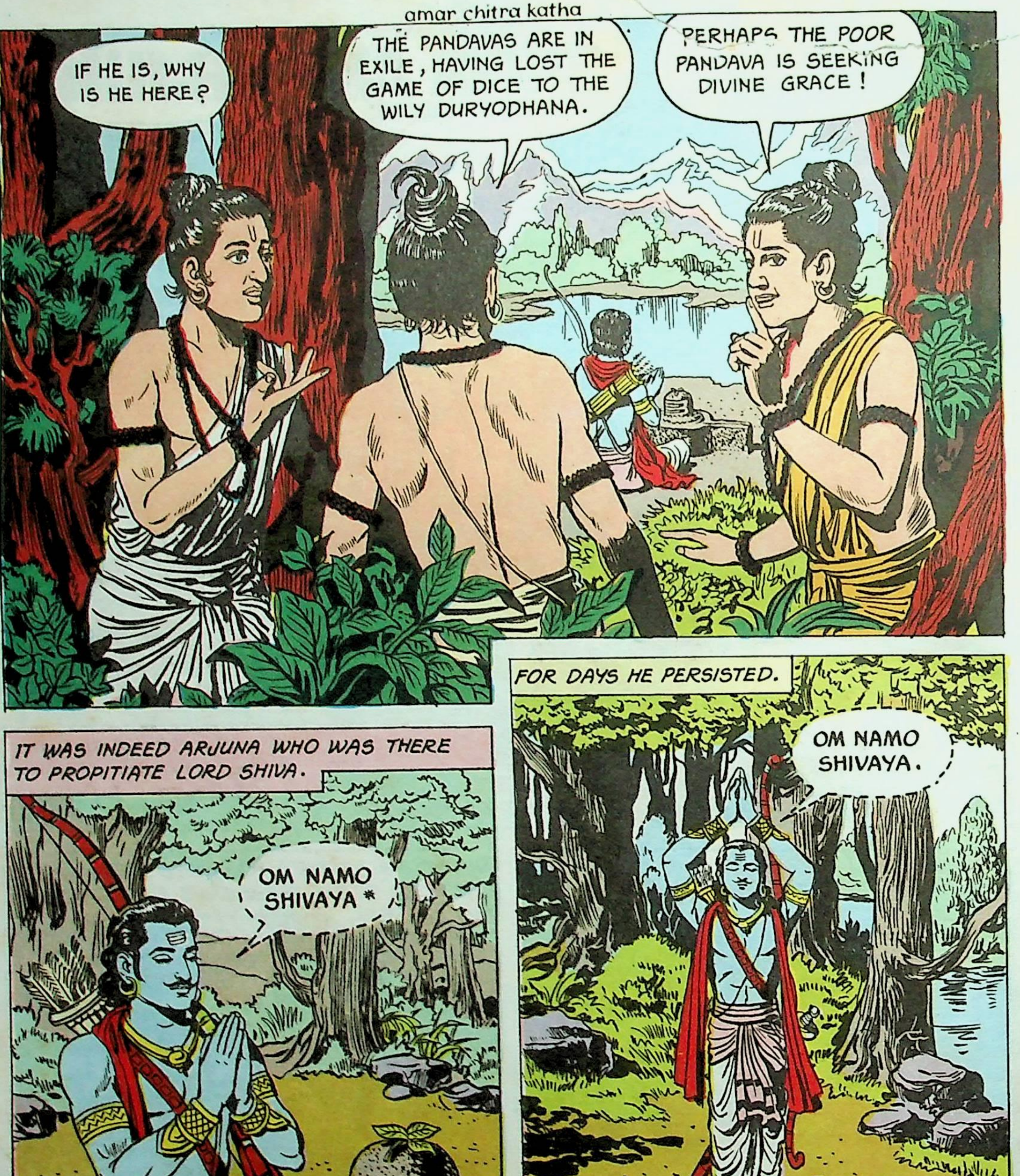
Script	Illustrations	Editor
Subba Rao	C.M.Vitankar	Anant Pai

SHIVA AND ARJUNA


QUIET, PEACEFUL INDRAKEELA, IN THE HIMALAYAS WAS A RETREAT OF ASCETICS.

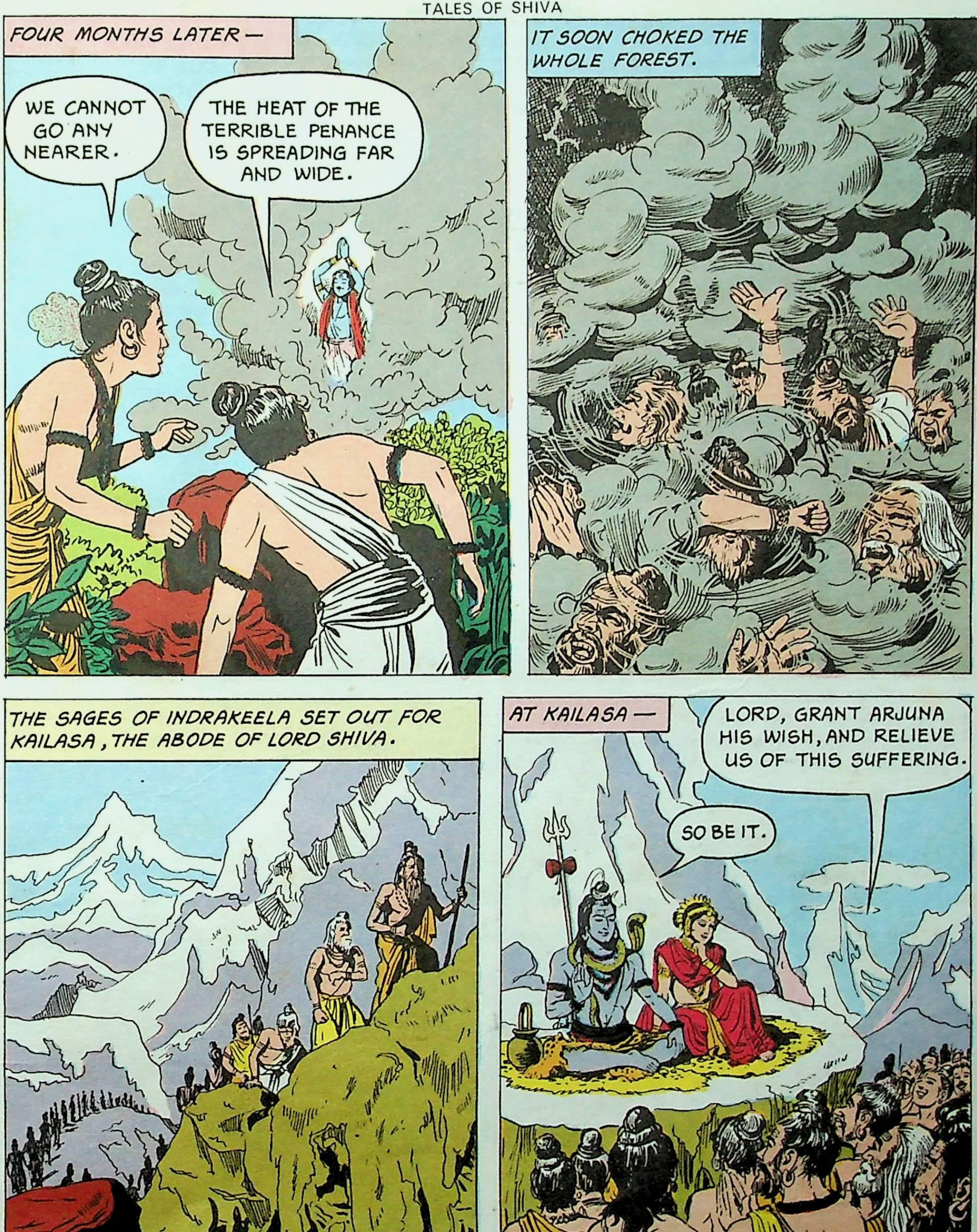

ONE DAY—
WHO COULD THIS STRANGER BE?
DOESN'T HE KNOW THAT WEAPONS HAVE NO PLACE HERE?

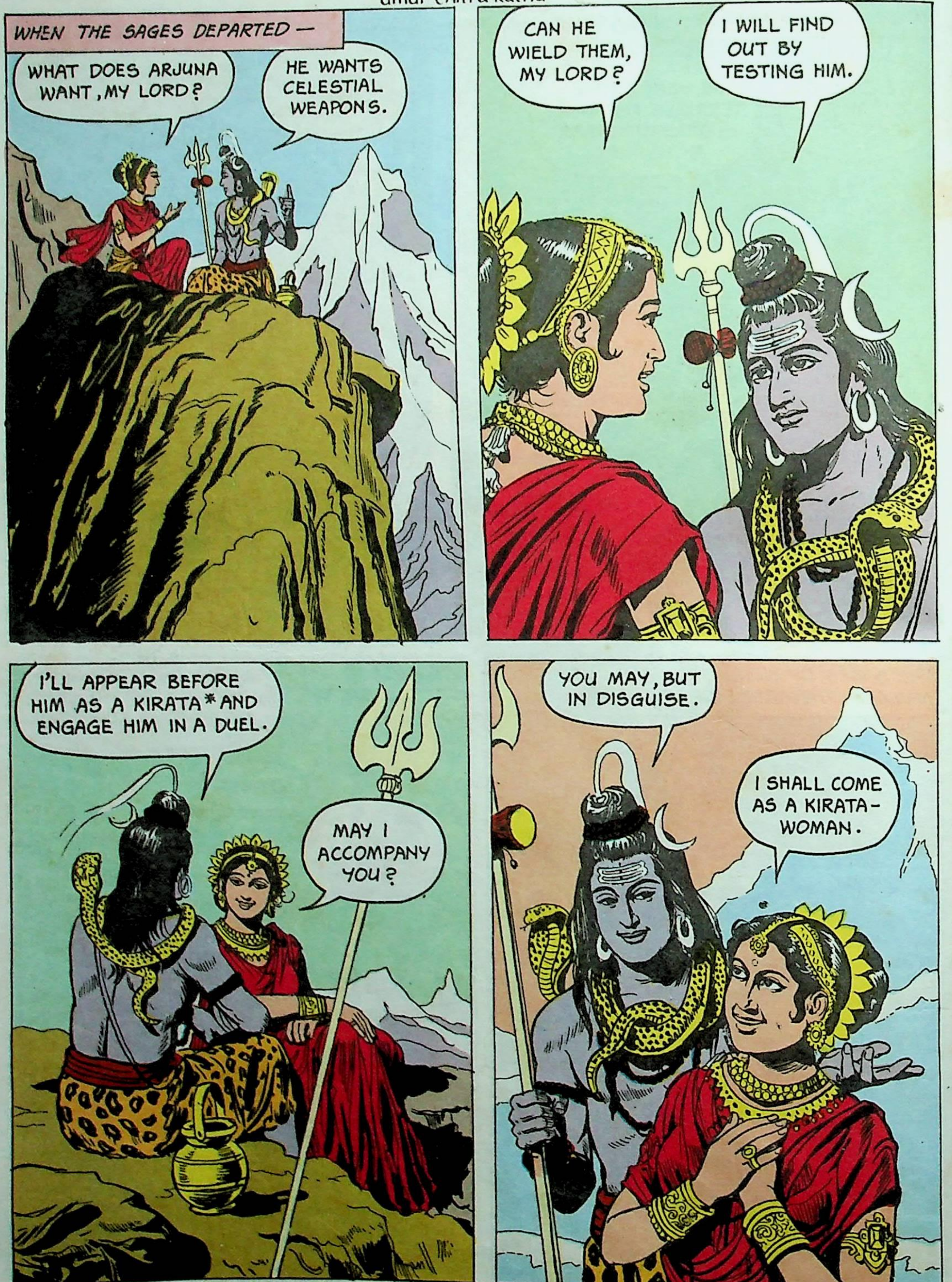

THE YOUNG ASCETICS FOLLOWED THE STRANGER TO THE RIVER BANK AND WATCHED HIM CLOSELY.
LOOK AT HIS BOW! COULD HE BE ARJUNA, THE PANDAVA?


IF HE IS, WHY IS HE HERE?
THE PANDAVAS ARE IN EXILE, HAVING LOST THE GAME OF DICE TO THE WILY DURYODHANA.
PERHAPS THE POOR PANDAVA IS SEEKING DIVINE GRACE!
IT WAS INDEED ARJUNA WHO WAS THERE TO PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA.
OM NAMO SHIVAYA *
FOR DAYS HE PERSISTED.
OM NAMO SHIVAYA.

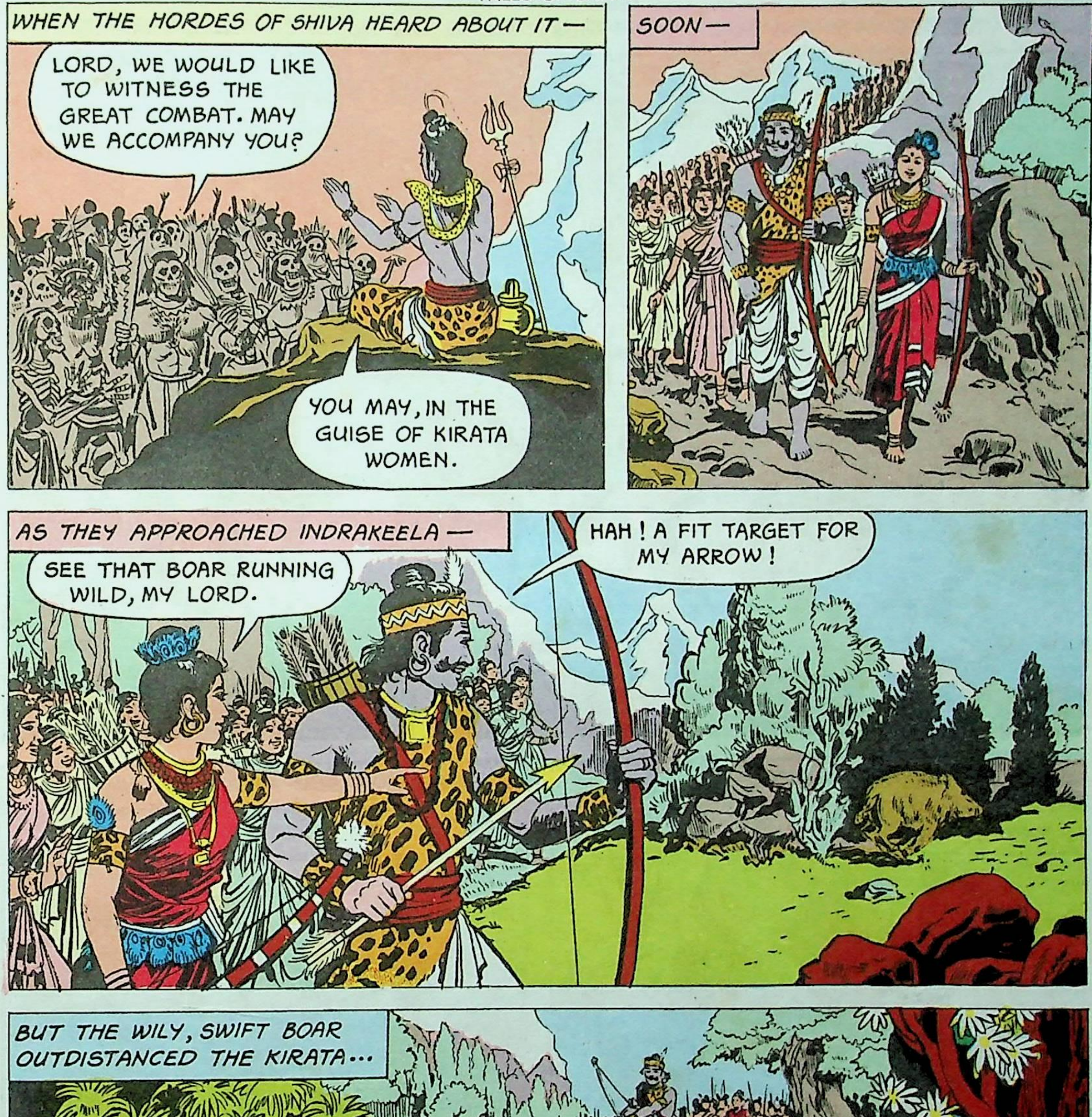
---

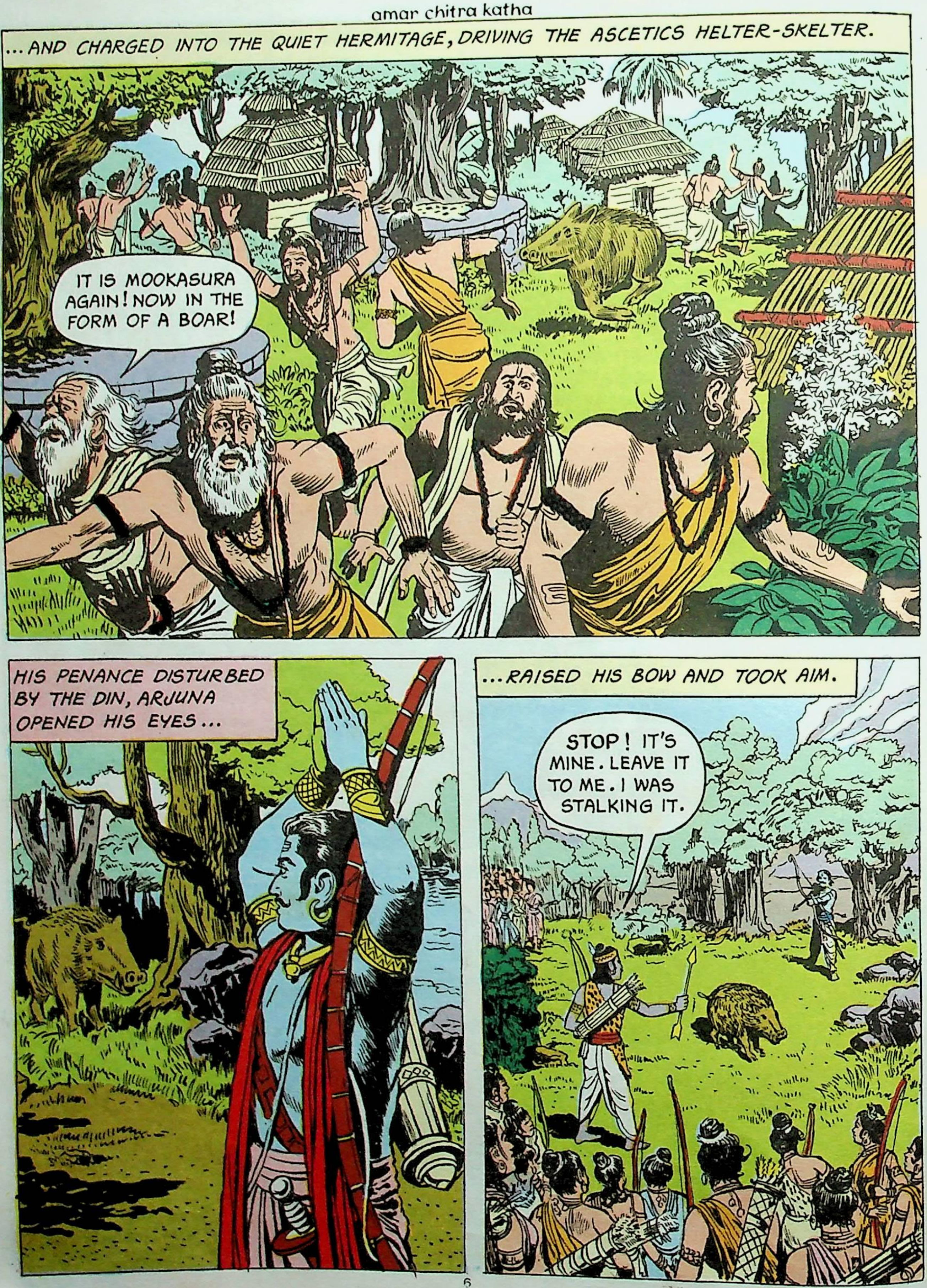
* SALUTATIONS TO SHIVA

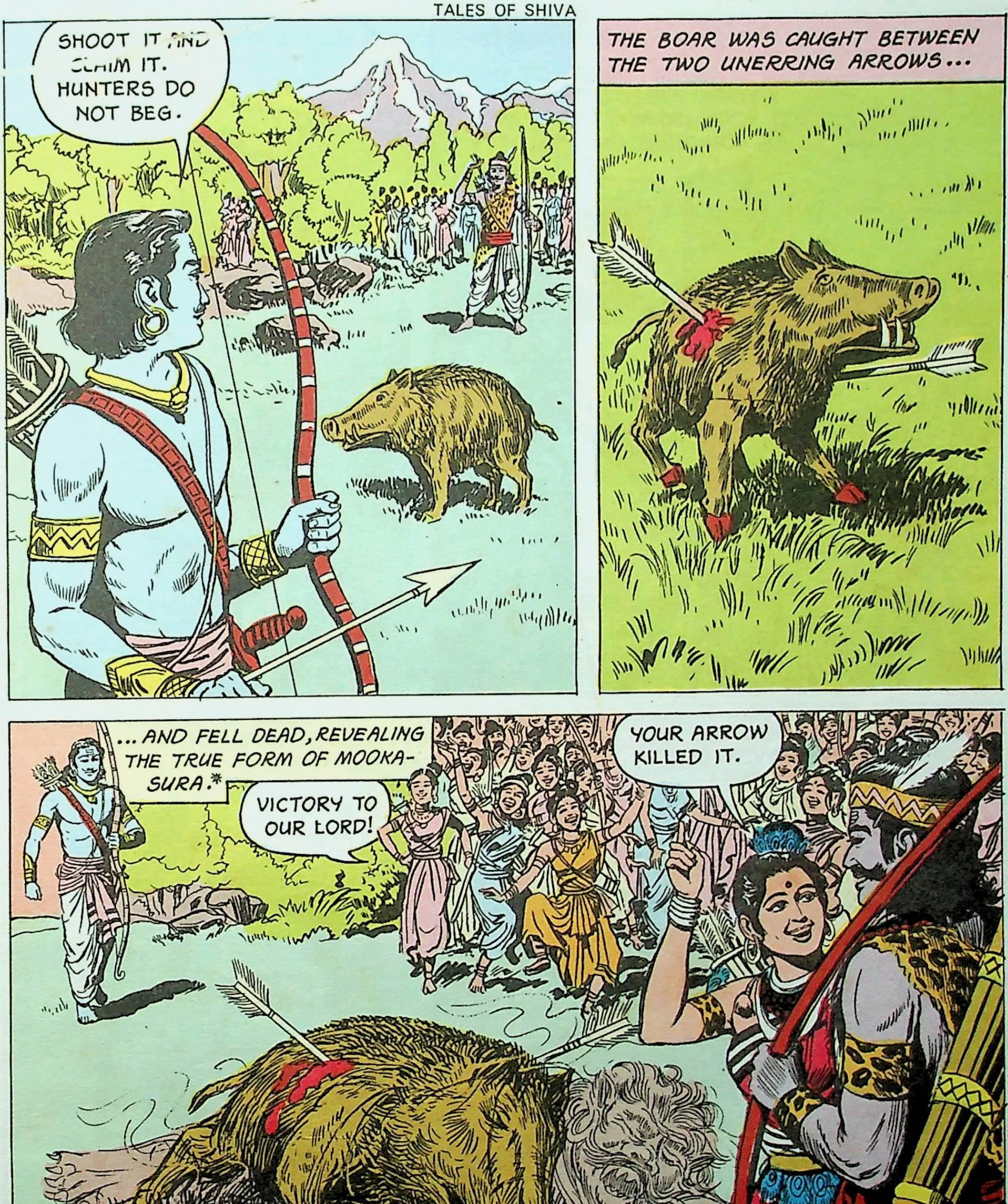

FOUR MONTHS LATER —
WE CANNOT GO ANY NEARER.
THE HEAT OF THE TERRIBLE PENANCE IS SPREADING FAR AND WIDE.
IT SOON CHOKED THE WHOLE FOREST.
THE SAGES OF INDRAKEELA SET OUT FOR KAILASA, THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA.
AT KAILASA —
LORD, GRANT ARJUNA HIS WISH, AND RELIEVE US OF THIS SUFFERING.
SO BE IT.


WHEN THE SAGES DEPARTED —
WHAT DOES ARJUNA WANT, MY LORD?
HE WANTS CELESTIAL WEAPONS.
CAN HE WIELD THEM, MY LORD?
I WILL FIND OUT BY TESTING HIM.
I'LL APPEAR BEFORE HIM AS A KIRATA* AND ENGAGE HIM IN A DUEL.
MAY I ACCOMPANY YOU?
YOU MAY, BUT IN DISGUISE.
I SHALL COME AS A KIRATA-WOMAN.

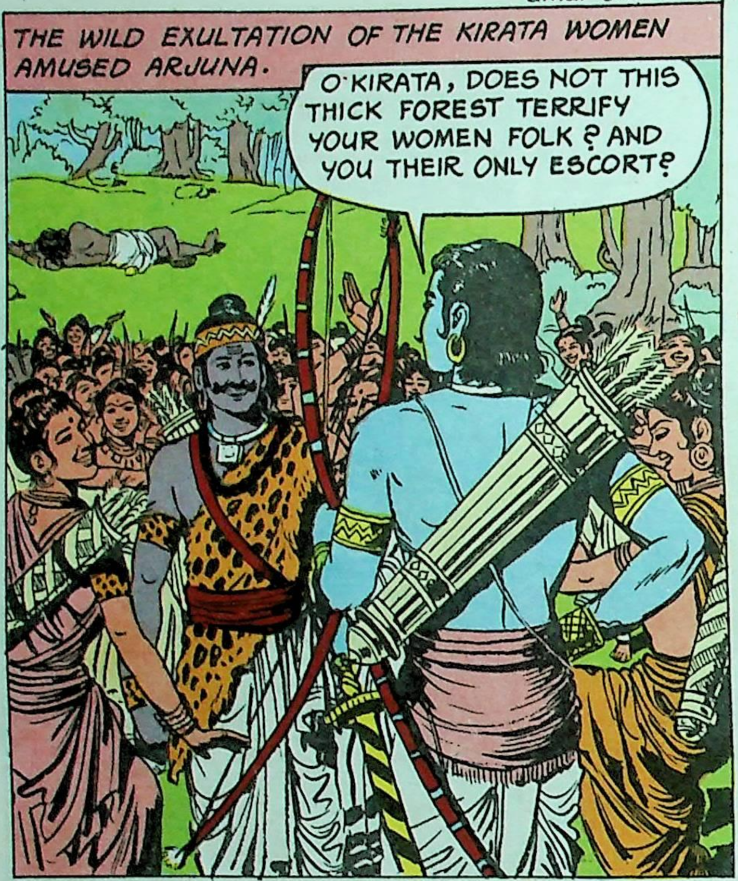
* HUNTER

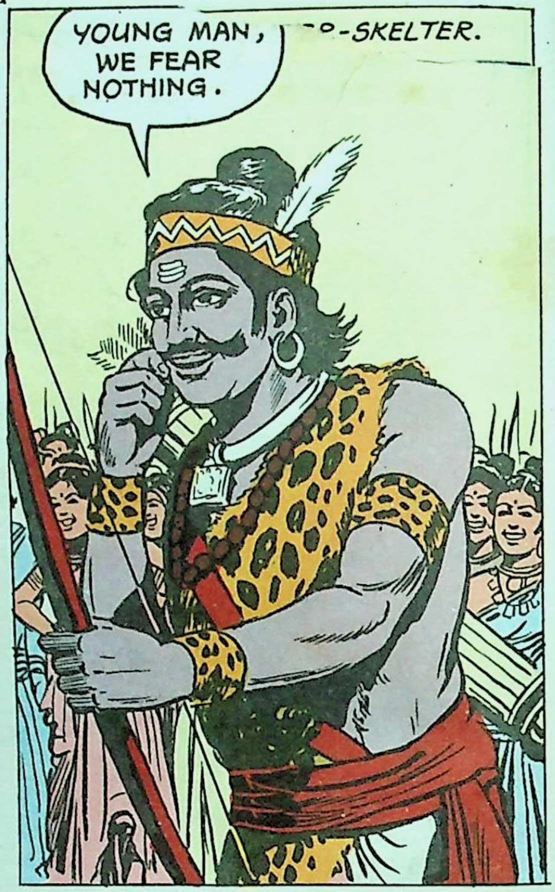

WHEN THE HORDES OF SHIVA HEARD ABOUT IT —
LORD, WE WOULD LIKE TO WITNESS THE GREAT COMBAT. MAY WE ACCOMPANY YOU?
YOU MAY, IN THE GUISE OF KIRATA WOMEN.
SOON —
AS THEY APPROACHED INDRAKEELA —
SEE THAT BOAR RUNNING WILD, MY LORD.
HAH! A FIT TARGET FOR MY ARROW!
BUT THE WILY, SWIFT BOAR OUTDISTANCED THE KIRATA...

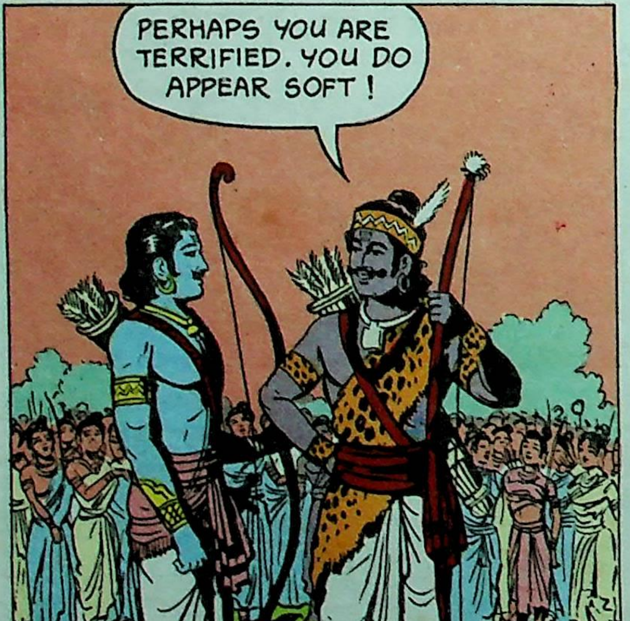

...AND CHARGED INTO THE QUIET HERMITAGE, DRIVING THE ASCETICS HELTER-SKELTER.
IT IS MOOKASURA AGAIN! NOW IN THE FORM OF A BOAR!
HIS PENANCE DISTURBED BY THE DIN, ARJUNA OPENED HIS EYES...
...RAISED HIS BOW AND TOOK AIM.
STOP! IT'S MINE. LEAVE IT TO ME. I WAS STALKING IT.

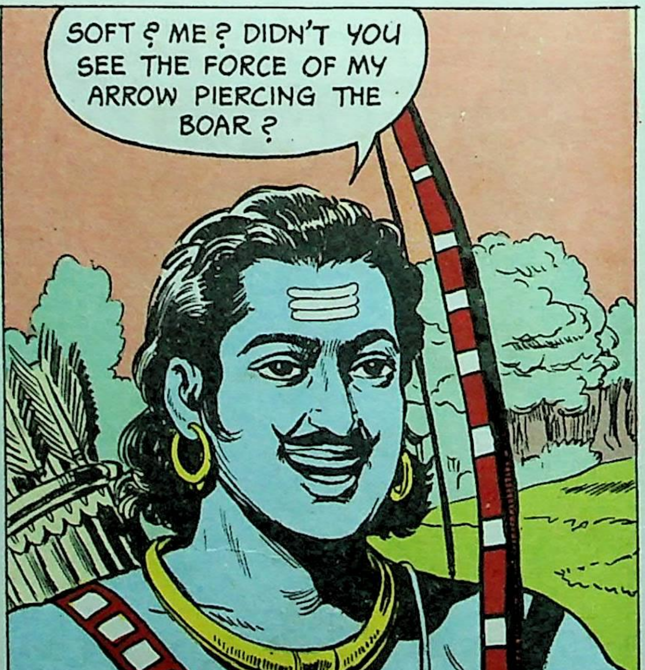

SHOOT IT AND CLAIM IT. HUNTERS DO NOT BEG.
THE BOAR WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN THE TWO UNERRING ARROWS...
... AND FELL DEAD, REVEALING THE TRUE FORM OF MOOKASURA.*
VICTORY TO OUR LORD!
YOUR ARROW KILLED IT.

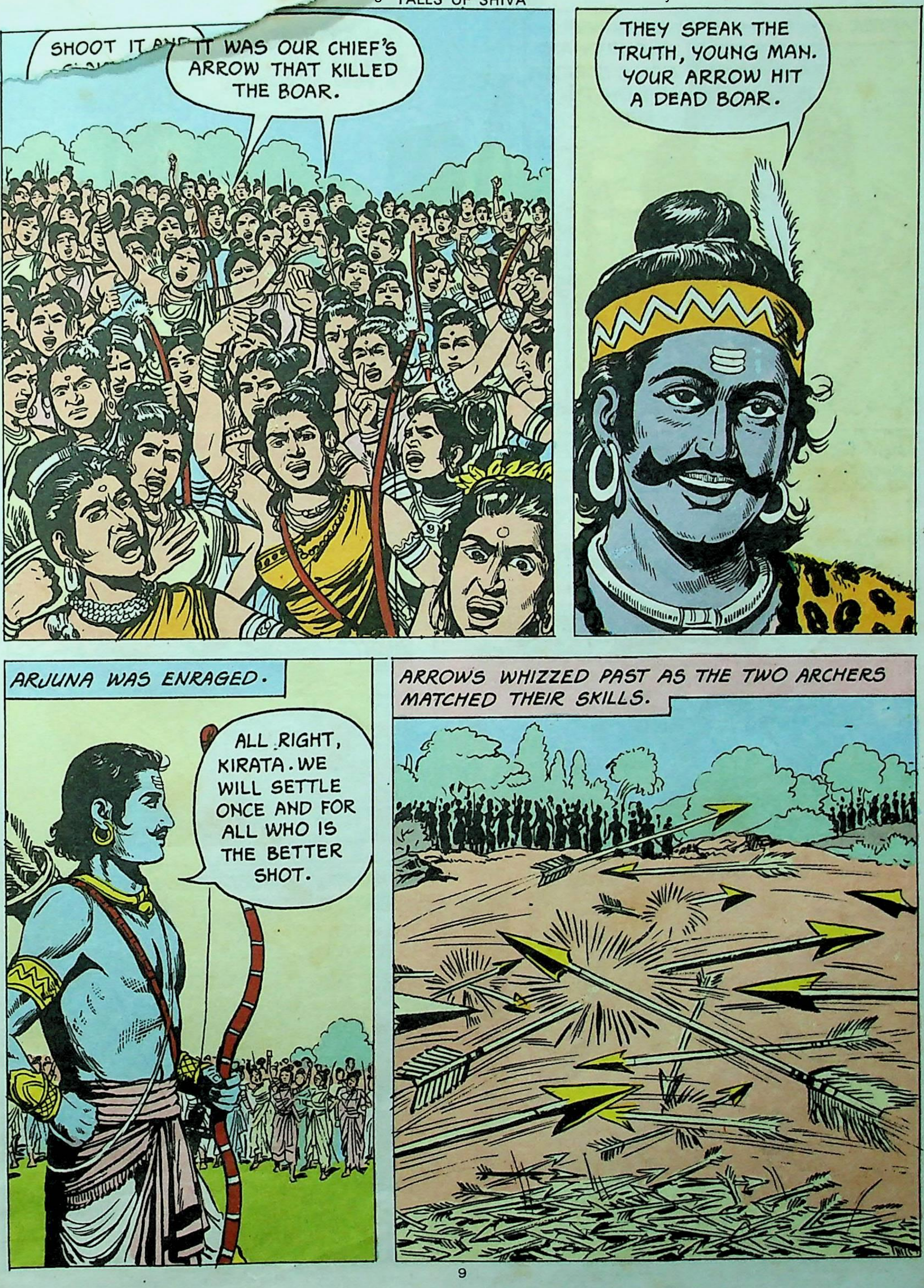
* DEMON MOOKA


THE WILD EXULTATION OF THE KIRATA WOMEN AMUSED ARJUNA.
O KIRATA, DOES NOT THIS THICK FOREST TERRIFY YOUR WOMEN FOLK? AND YOU THEIR ONLY ESCORT?


-SKELTER.
YOUNG MAN, WE FEAR NOTHING.


PERHAPS YOU ARE TERRIFIED. YOU DO APPEAR SOFT!


SOFT? ME? DIDN'T YOU SEE THE FORCE OF MY ARROW PIERCING THE BOAR?


SHOOT IT AN
IT WAS OUR CHIEF'S ARROW THAT KILLED THE BOAR.
THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH, YOUNG MAN. YOUR ARROW HIT A DEAD BOAR.
ARJUNA WAS ENRAGED.
ALL RIGHT, KIRATA. WE WILL SETTLE ONCE AND FOR ALL WHO IS THE BETTER SHOT.
ARROWS WHIZZED PAST AS THE TWO ARCHERS MATCHED THEIR SKILLS.

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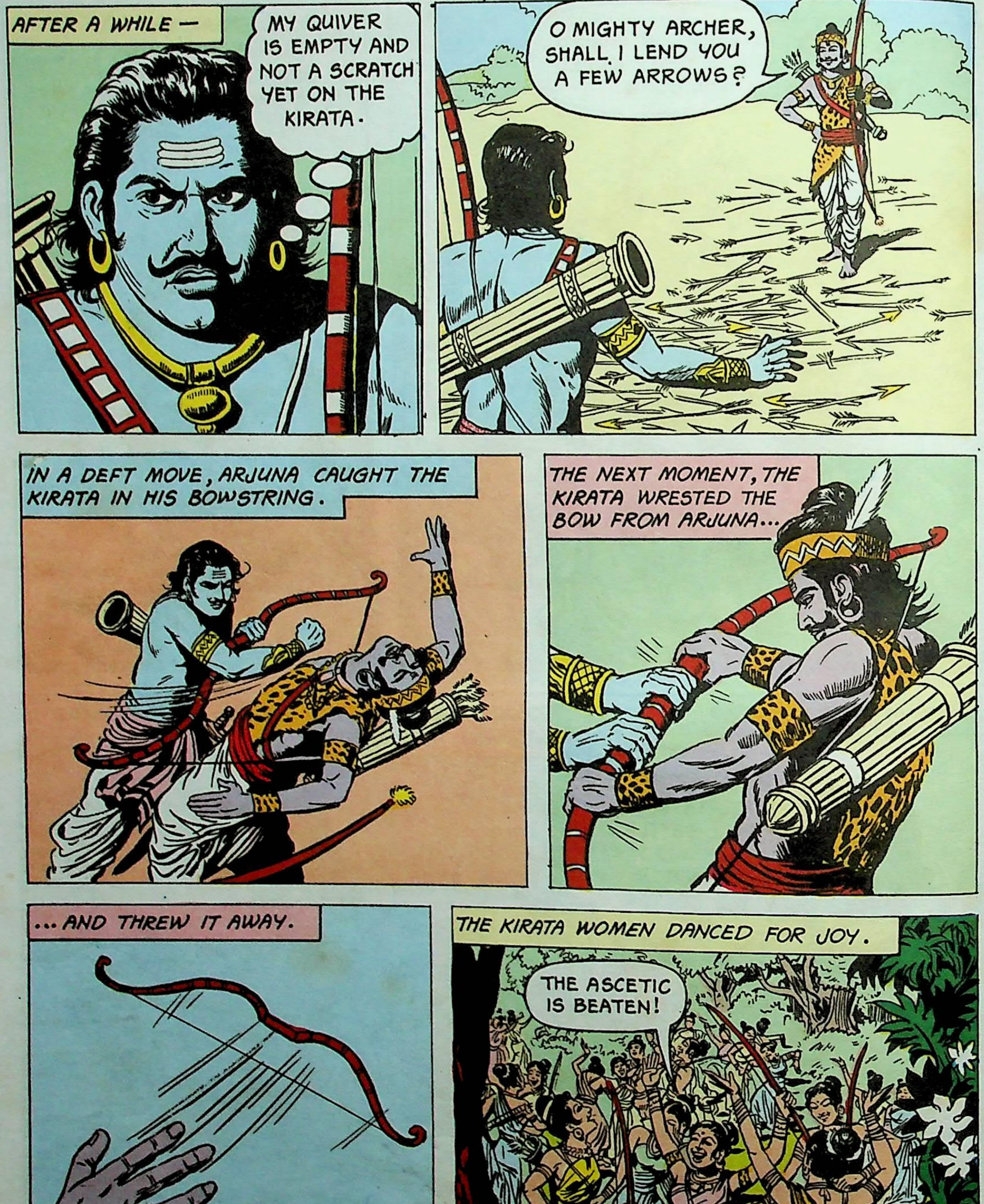
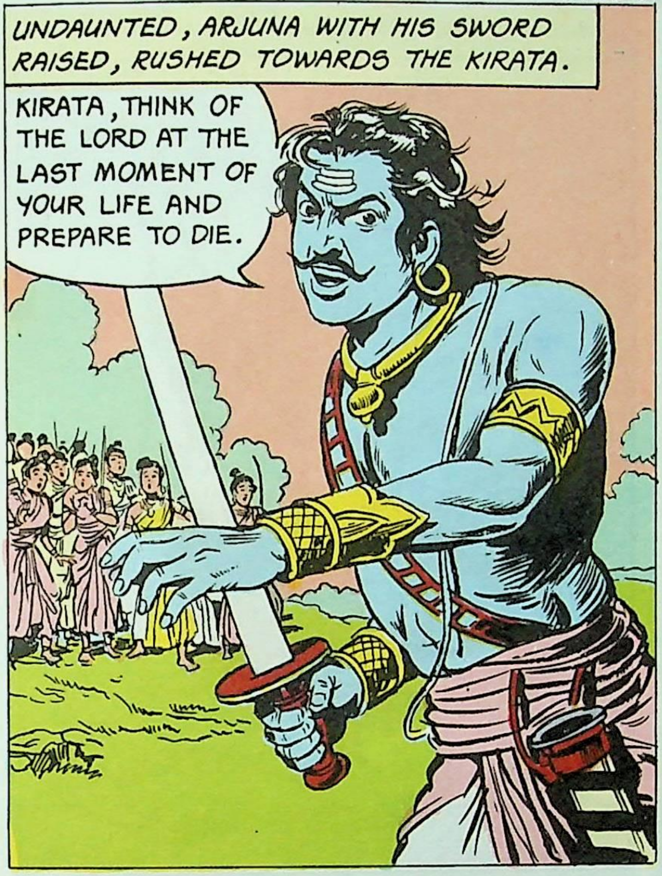
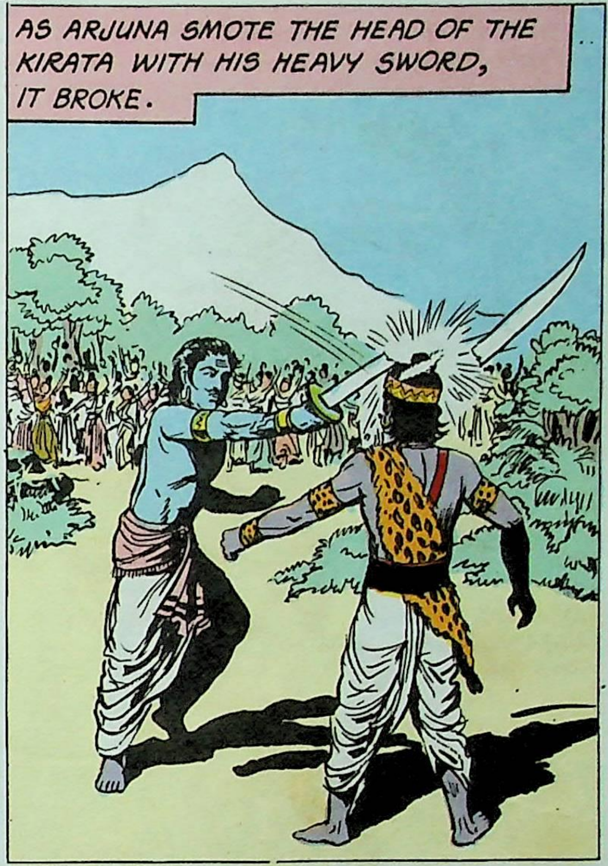
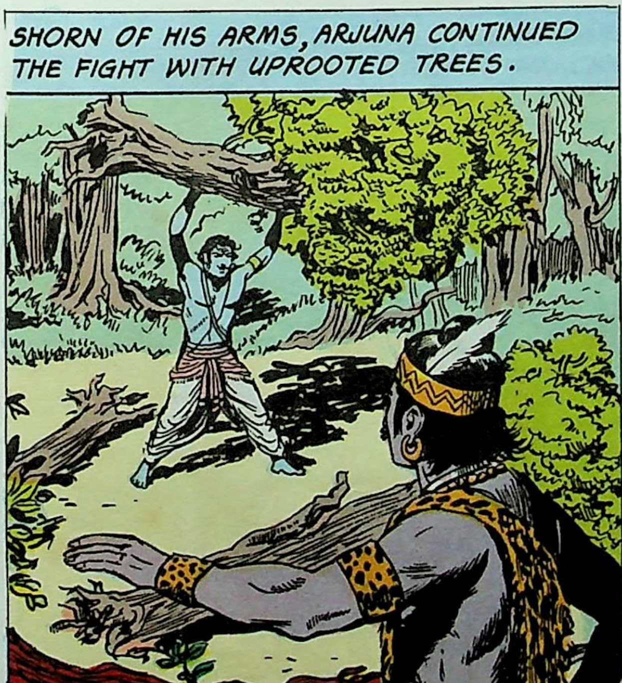
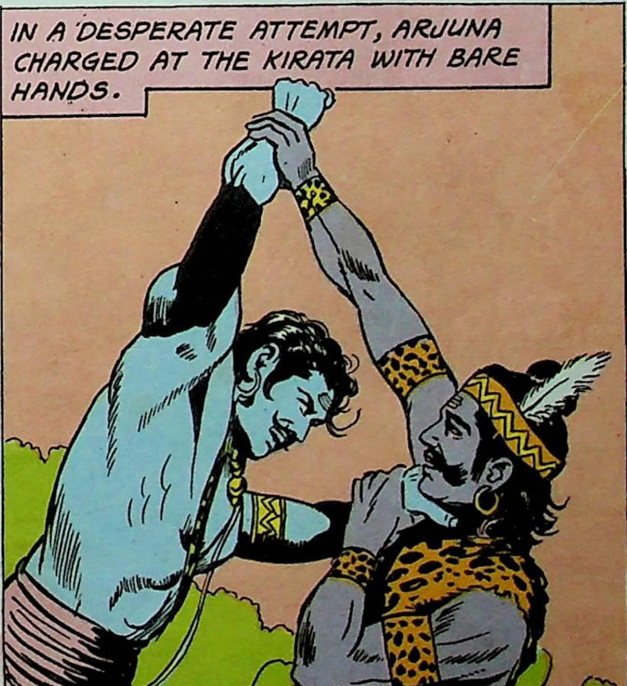
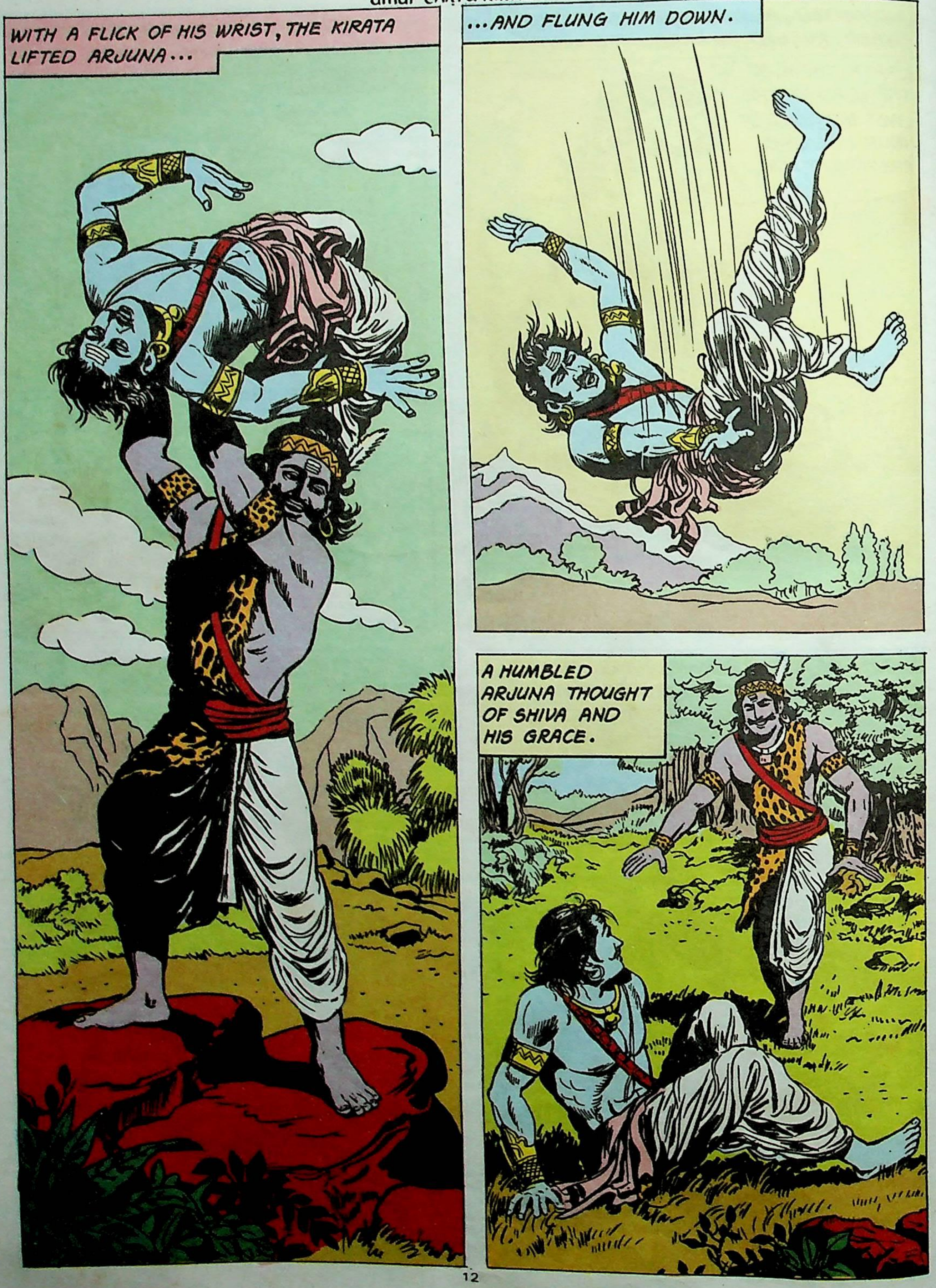

AFTER A WHILE —
MY QUIVER IS EMPTY AND NOT A SCRATCH YET ON THE KIRATA.
O MIGHTY ARCHER, SHALL I LEND YOU A FEW ARROWS?
IN A DEFT MOVE, ARJUNA CAUGHT THE KIRATA IN HIS BOWSTRING.
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE KIRATA WRESTED THE BOW FROM ARJUNA...
... AND THREW IT AWAY.
THE KIRATA WOMEN DANCED FOR JOY.
THE ASCETIC IS BEATEN!

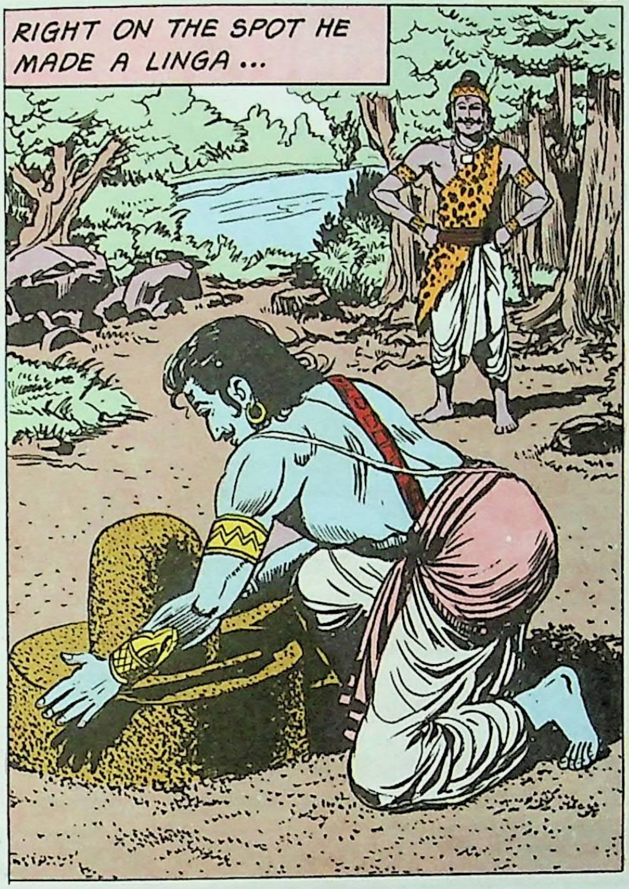

UNDAUNTED, ARJUNA WITH HIS SWORD RAISED, RUSHED TOWARDS THE KIRATA.
KIRATA, THINK OF THE LORD AT THE LAST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE AND PREPARE TO DIE.

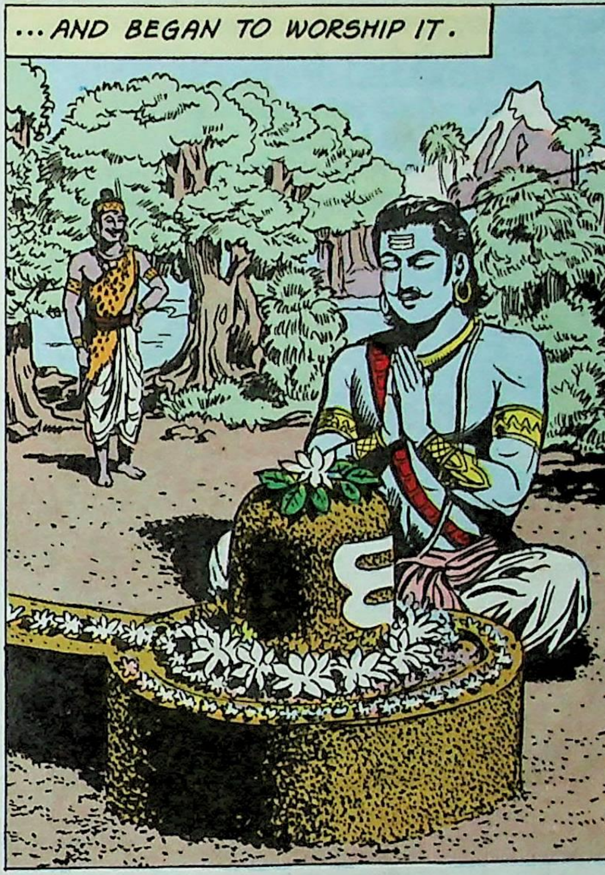

AS ARJUNA SMOTE THE HEAD OF THE KIRATA WITH HIS HEAVY SWORD, IT BROKE.

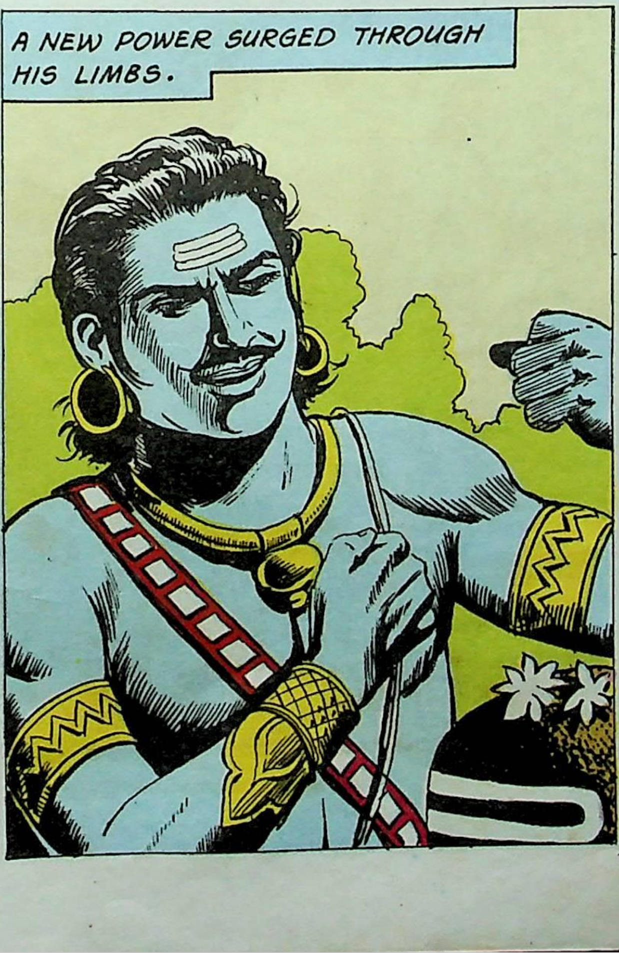

SHORN OF HIS ARMS, ARJUNA CONTINUED THE FIGHT WITH UPROOTED TREES.
BUT THE KIRATA REMAINED UNSCATHED.

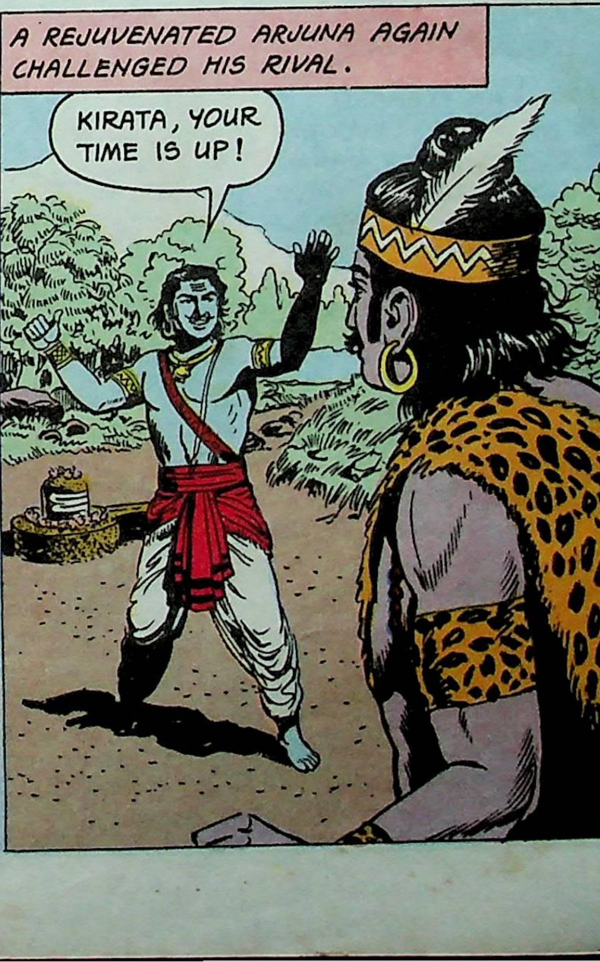

IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT, ARJUNA CHARGED AT THE KIRATA WITH BARE HANDS.


WITH A FLICK OF HIS WRIST, THE KIRATA LIFTED ARJUNA...
...AND FLUNG HIM DOWN.
A HUMBLED ARJUNA THOUGHT OF SHIVA AND HIS GRACE.

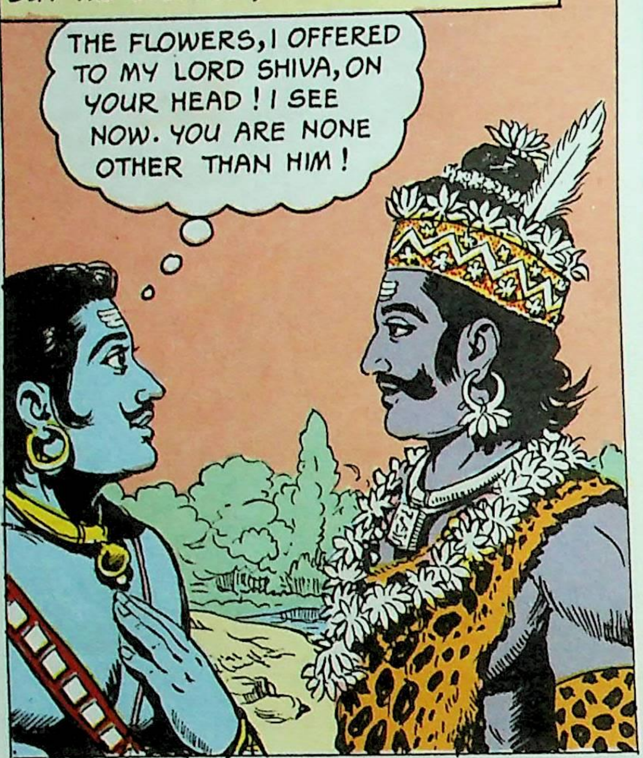

RIGHT ON THE SPOT HE MADE A LINGA ...


... AND BEGAN TO WORSHIP IT.

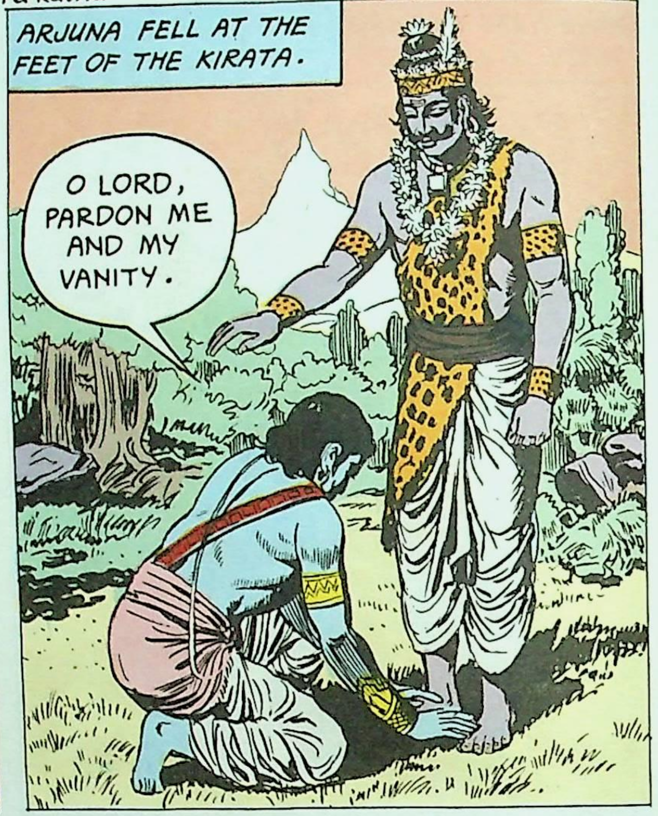

A NEW POWER SURGED THROUGH HIS LIMBS.


A REJUVENATED ARJUNA AGAIN CHALLENGED HIS RIVAL.
KIRATA, YOUR TIME IS UP!

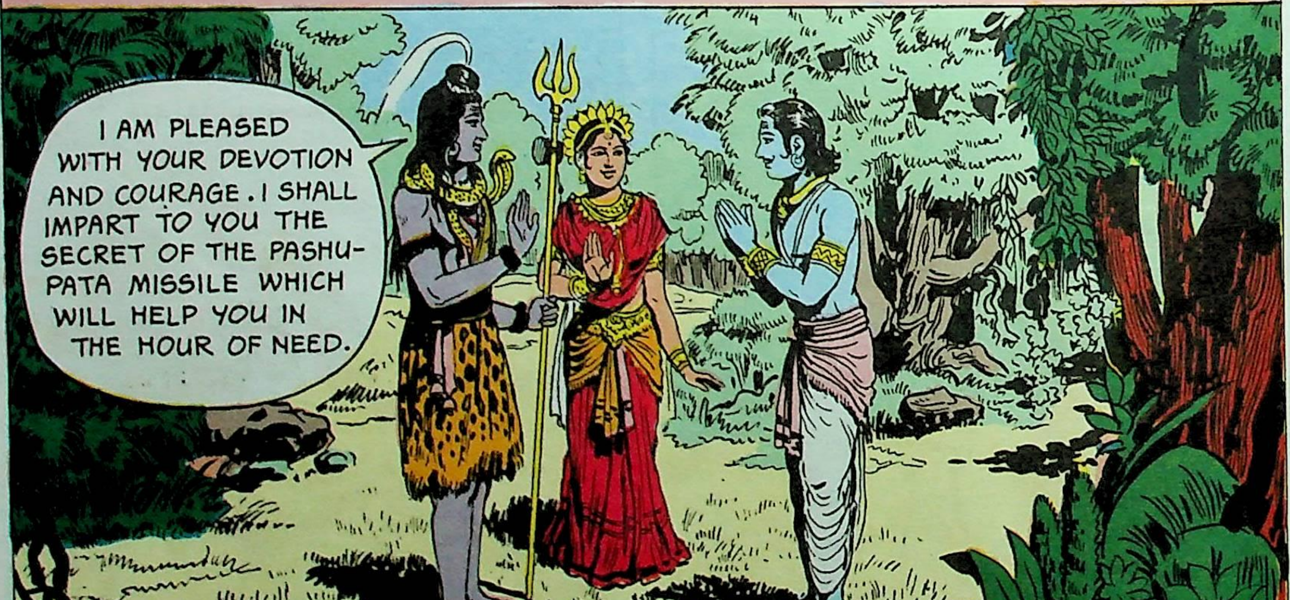
BUT HE STOPPED, AS IF TRANSFIXED.


THE FLOWERS, I OFFERED TO MY LORD SHIVA, ON YOUR HEAD! I SEE NOW. YOU ARE NONE OTHER THAN HIM!

ARJUNA FELL AT THE FEET OF THE KIRATA.

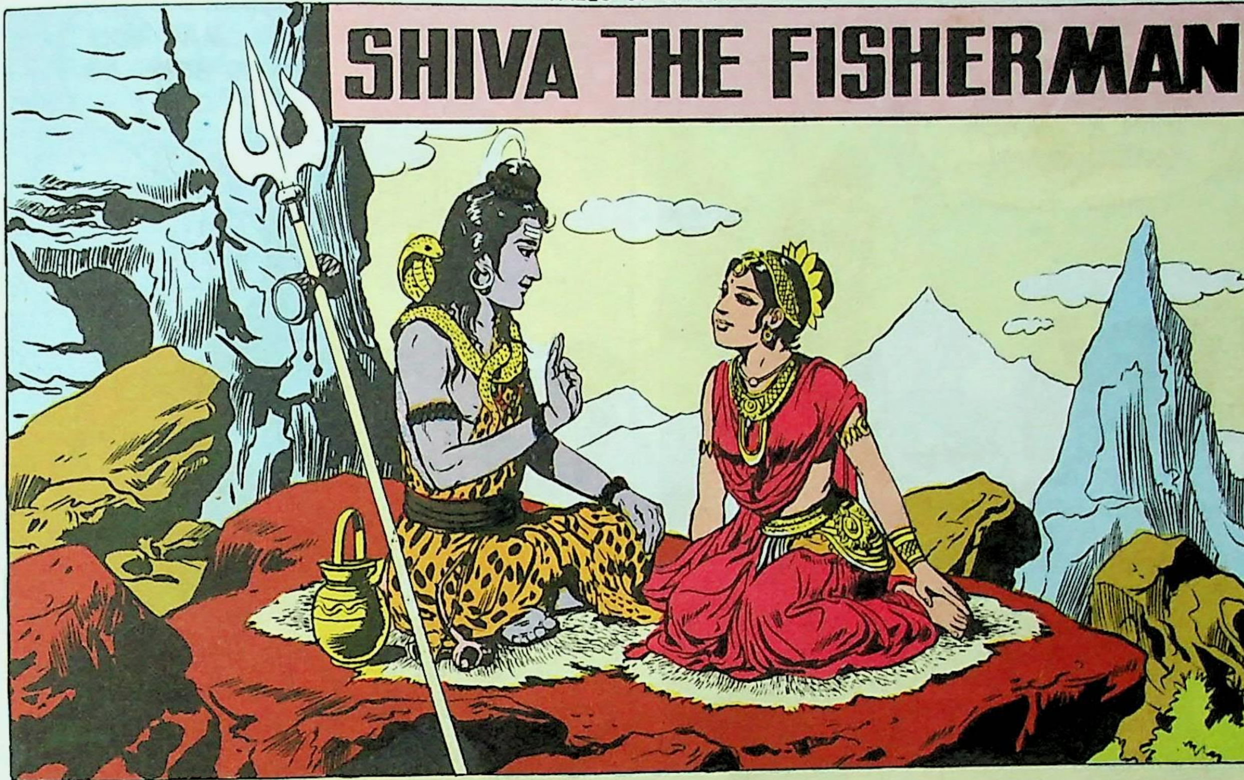

O LORD, PARDON ME AND MY VANITY.

SHIVA THEN REVEALED HIMSELF IN HIS TRUE FORM AND SO DID PARVATI IN HERS.


I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR DEVOTION AND COURAGE. I SHALL IMPART TO YOU THE SECRET OF THE PASHUPATA MISSILE WHICH WILL HELP YOU IN THE HOUR OF NEED.

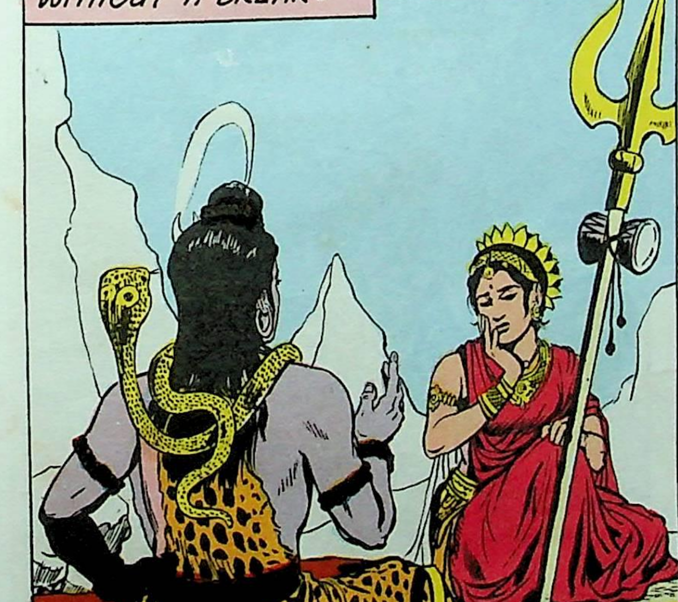
SHIVA'S WORD CAME TRUE. LATER IN THE MAHABHARATA WAR, IT WAS ONLY WITH THE PASHUPATA THAT ARJUNA COULD KILL HIS ARCH-RIVAL, KARNA.

SHIVA THE FISHERMAN

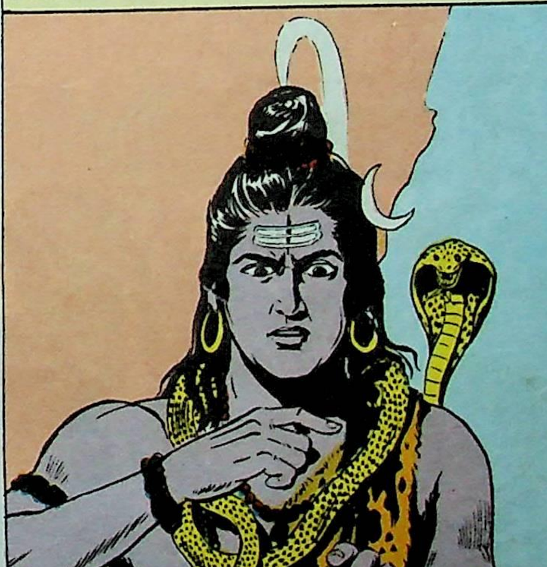


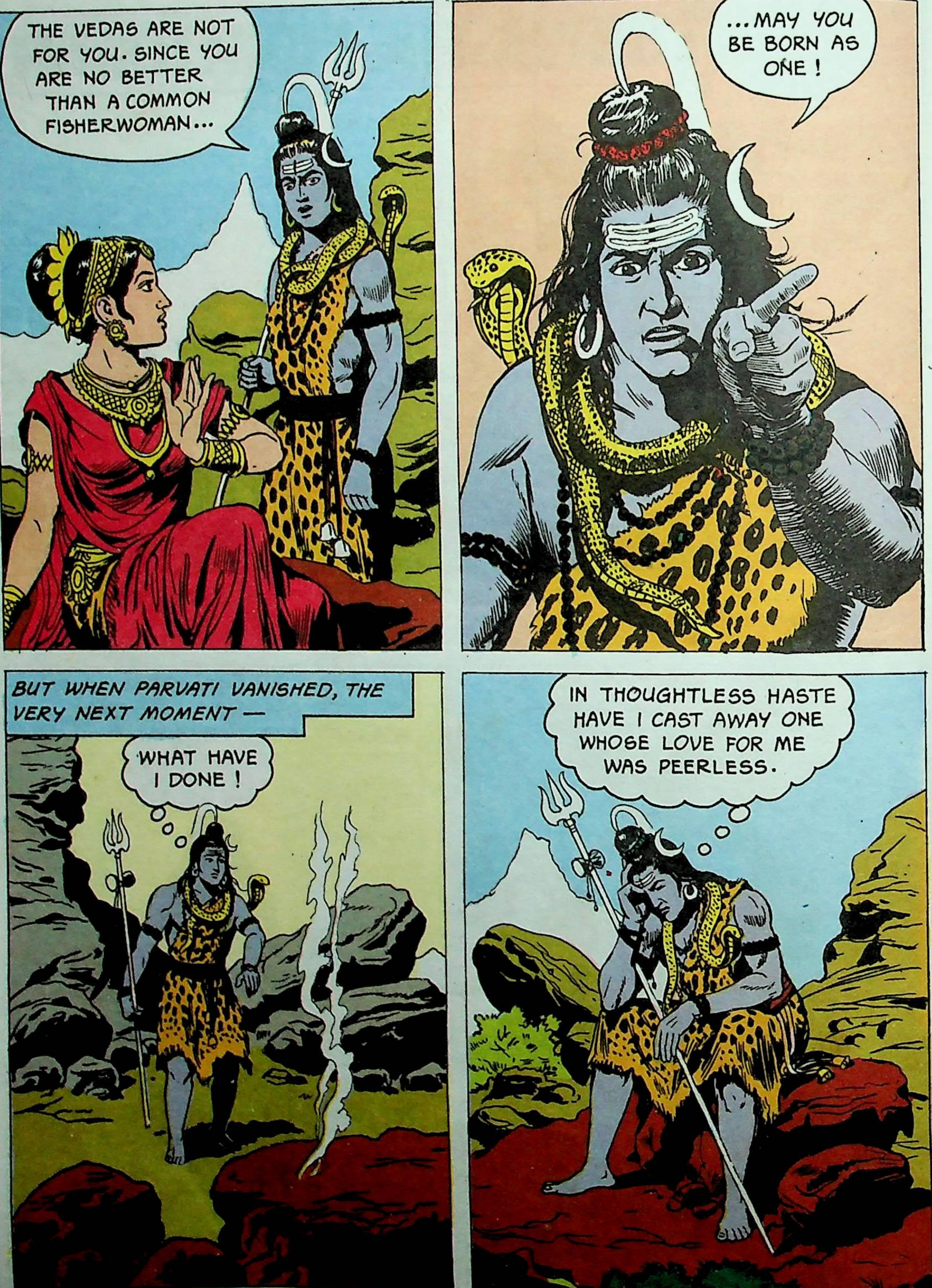
ONCE IN KAILASA, SHIVA STARTED EXPOUNDING THE MYSTERY OF THE VEDAS TO PARVATI WHO WAS LISTENING ATTENTIVELY.

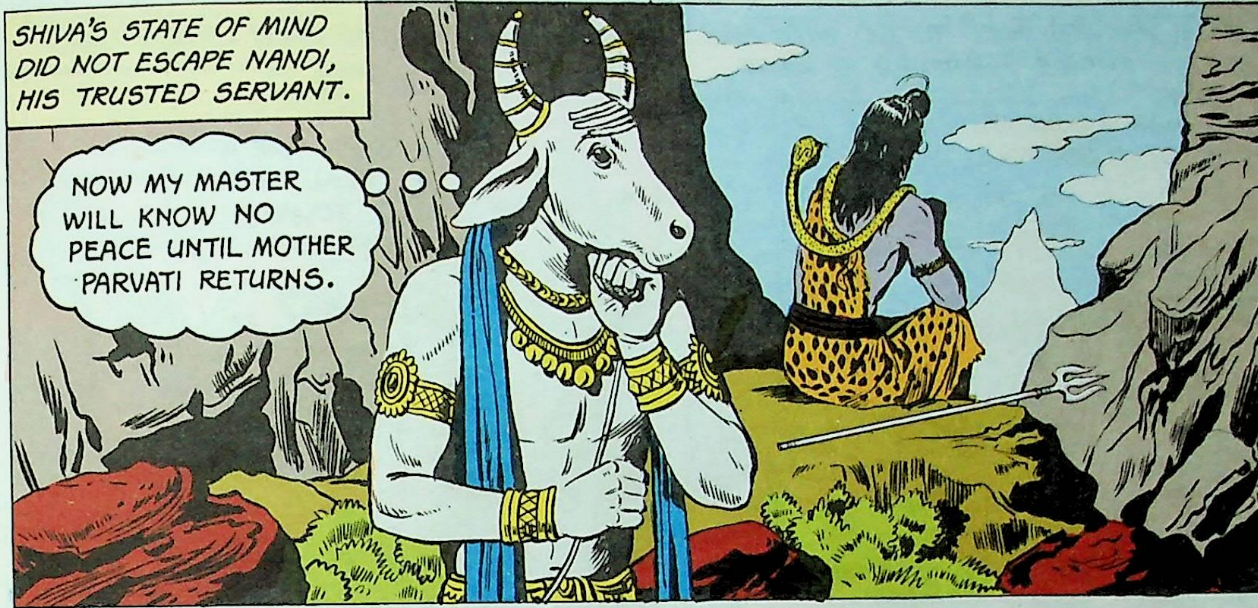
YEARS PASSED BY. SHIVA CONTINUED WITHOUT A BREAK.

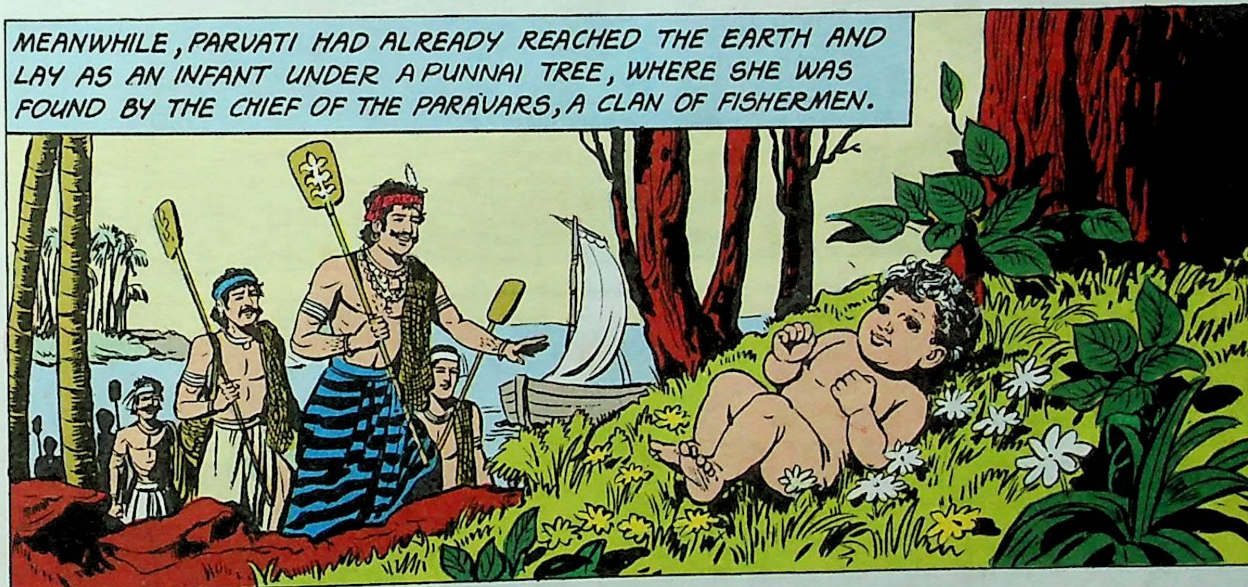


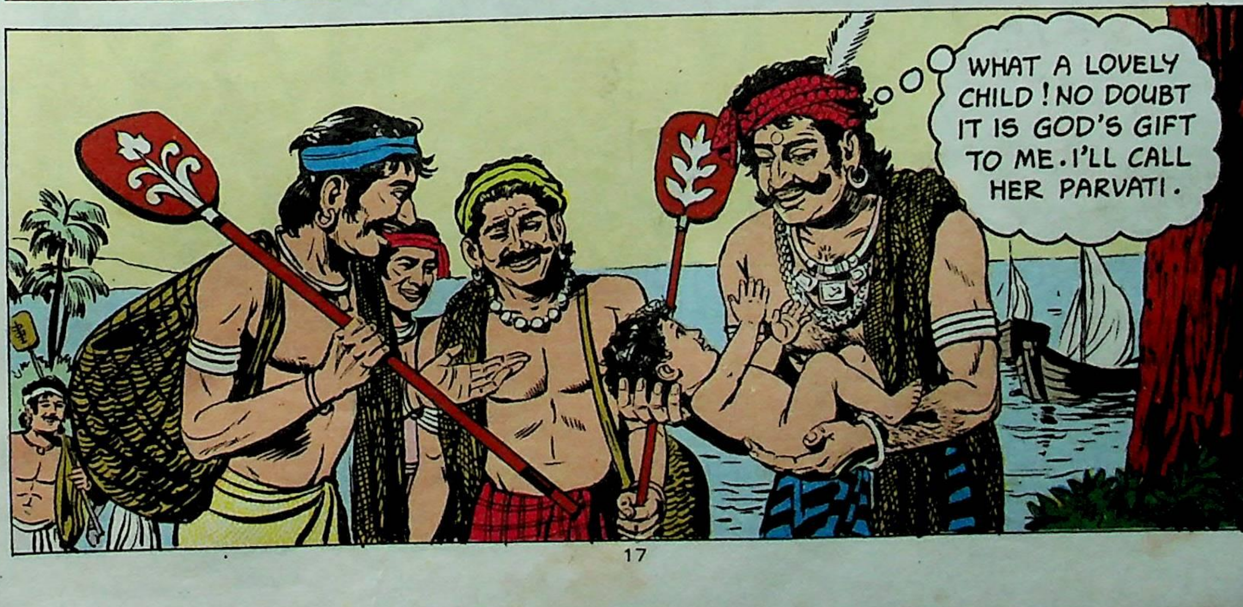
GRADUALLY, IN SPITE OF HER BEST EFFORTS, PARVATI'S ATTENTION FLAGGED AND SHIVA WAS ANNOYED.



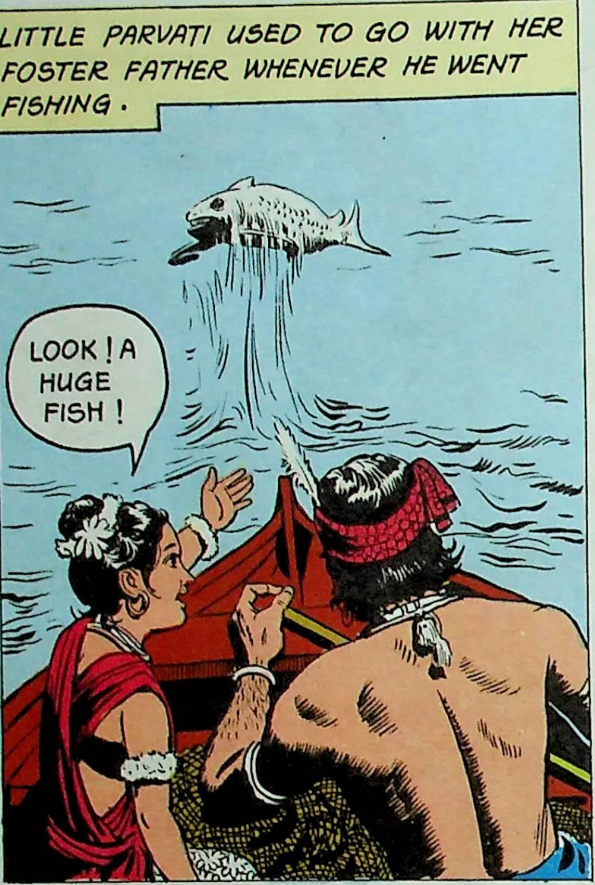

THE VEDAS ARE NOT FOR YOU. SINCE YOU ARE NO BETTER THAN A COMMON FISHERWOMAN...
...MAY YOU BE BORN AS ONE !
BUT WHEN PARVATI VANISHED, THE VERY NEXT MOMENT —
WHAT HAVE I DONE !
IN THOUGHTLESS HASTE HAVE I CAST AWAY ONE WHOSE LOVE FOR ME WAS PEERLESS.


SHIVA'S STATE OF MIND DID NOT ESCAPE NANDI, HIS TRUSTED SERVANT.
NOW MY MASTER WILL KNOW NO PEACE UNTIL MOTHER PARVATI RETURNS.

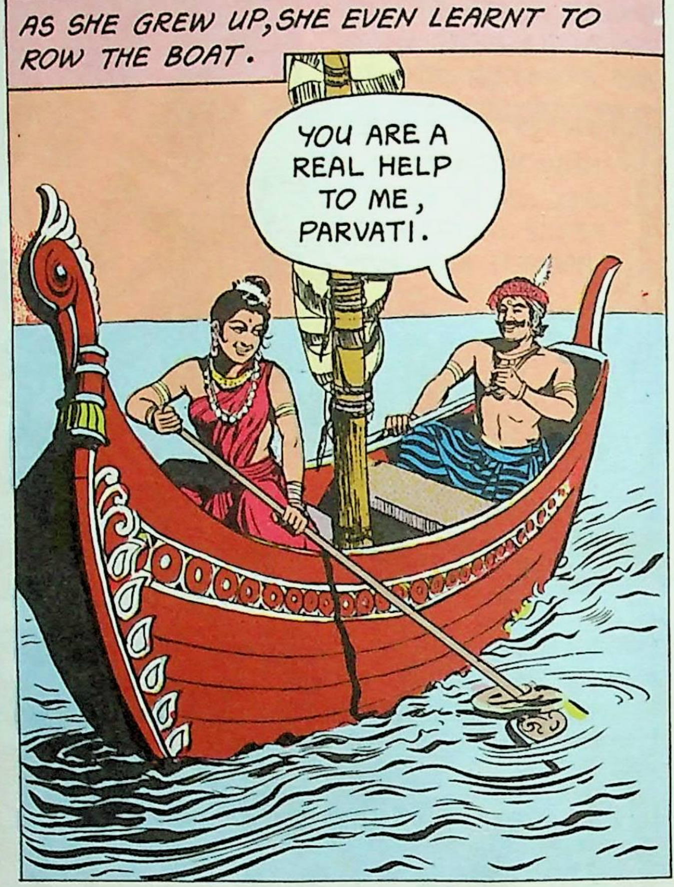

MEANWHILE, PARVATI HAD ALREADY REACHED THE EARTH AND LAY AS AN INFANT UNDER A PUNNAI TREE, WHERE SHE WAS FOUND BY THE CHIEF OF THE PARAVARS, A CLAN OF FISHERMEN.

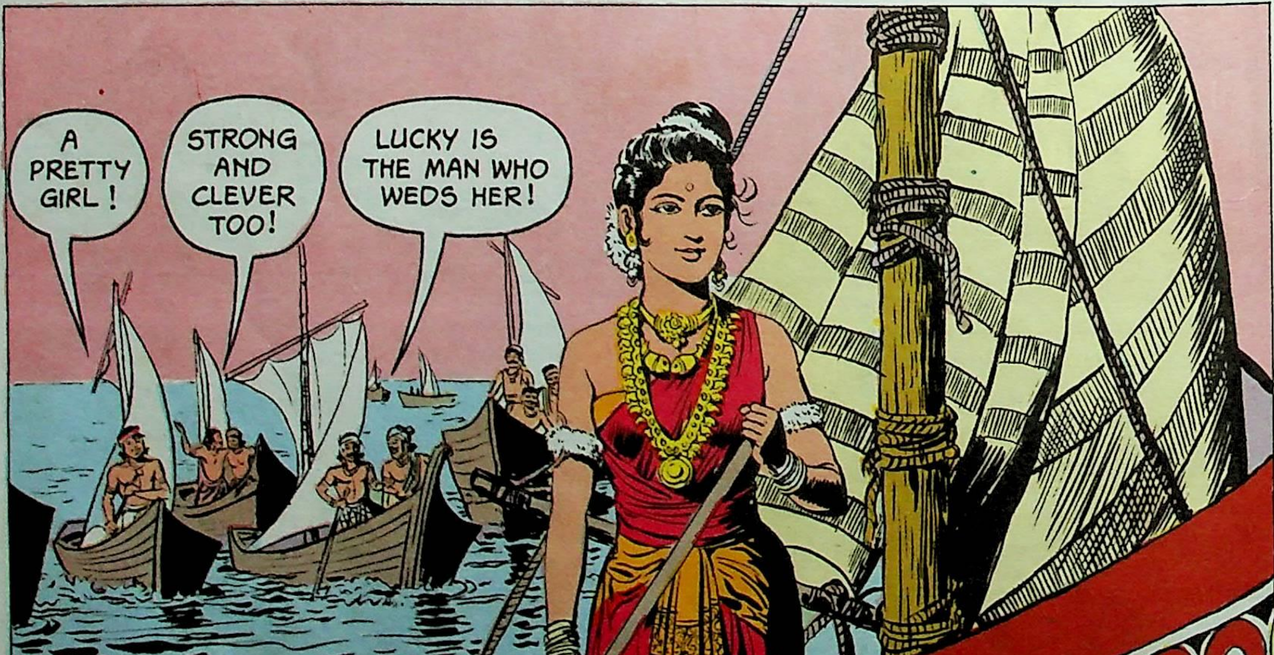

WHAT A LOVELY CHILD! NO DOUBT IT IS GOD'S GIFT TO ME. I'LL CALL HER PARVATI.

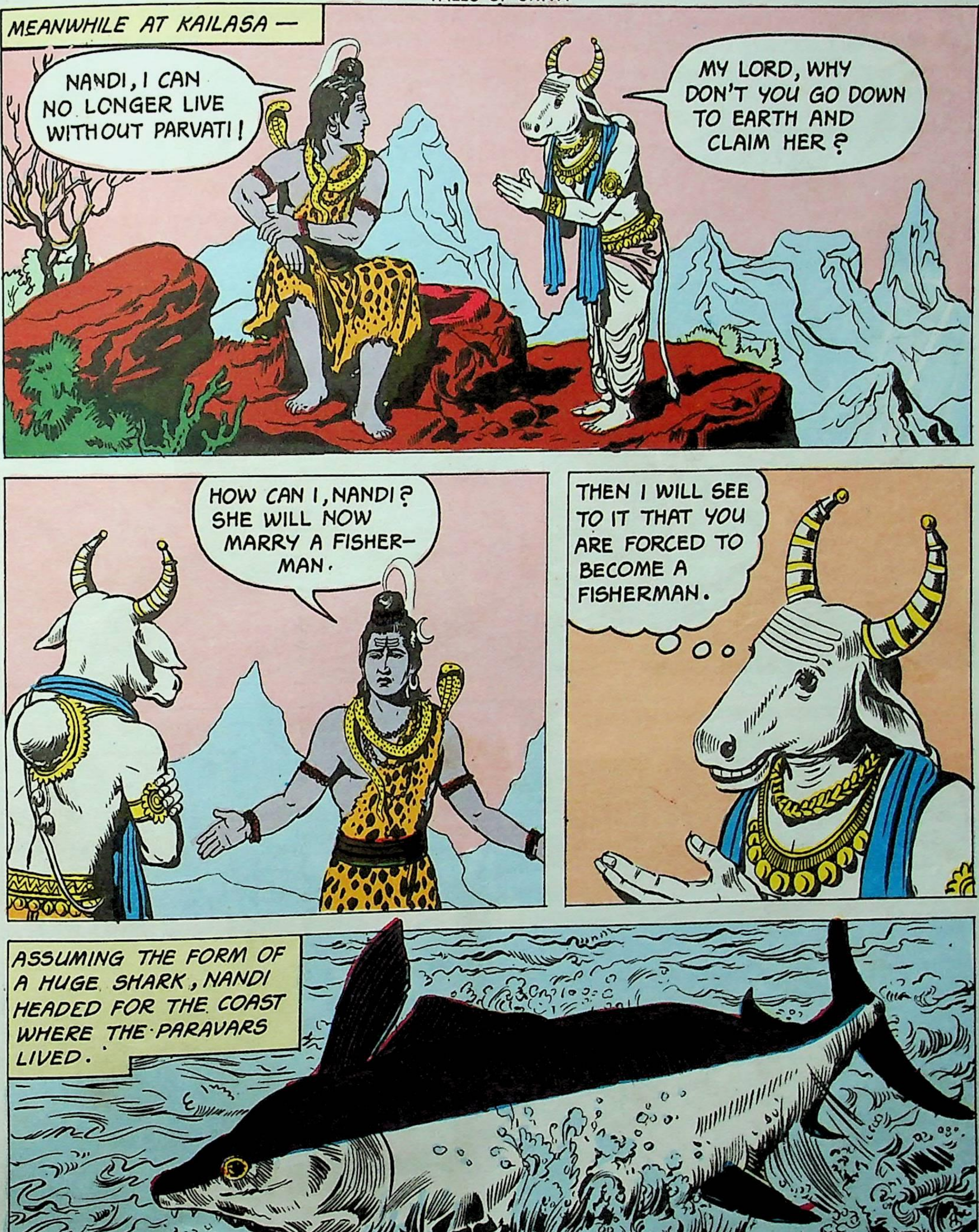
LITTLE PARVATI USED TO GO WITH HER FOSTER FATHER WHENEVER HE WENT FISHING.

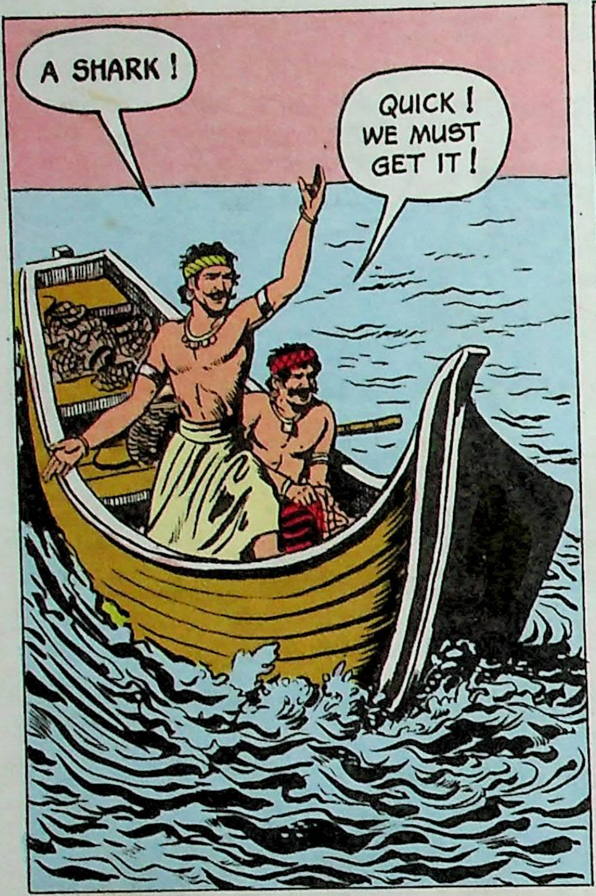

LOOK! A HUGE FISH!

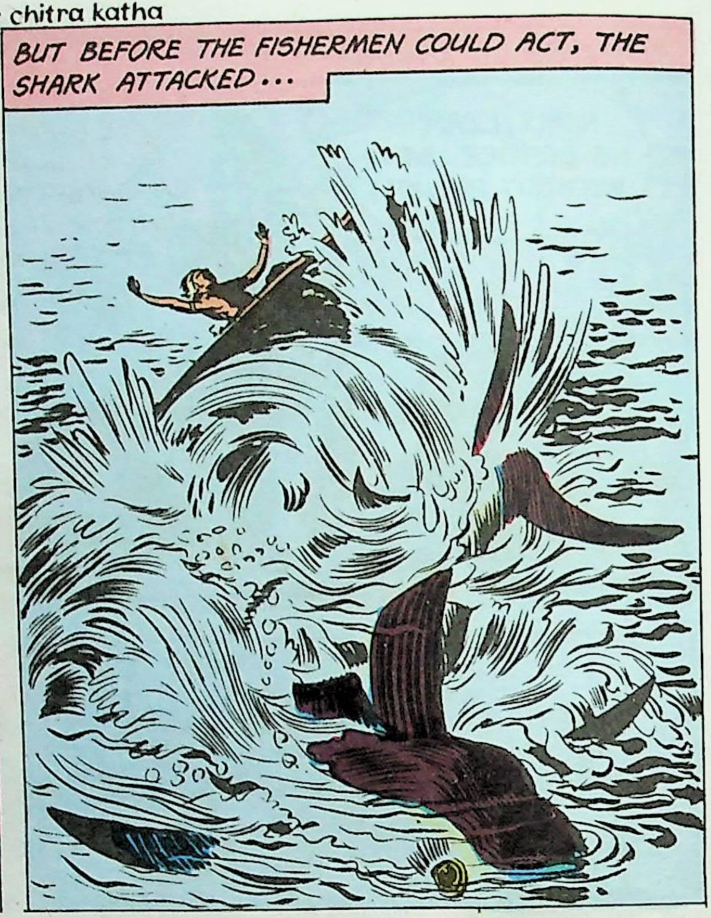
AS SHE GREW UP, SHE EVEN LEARNT TO ROW THE BOAT.

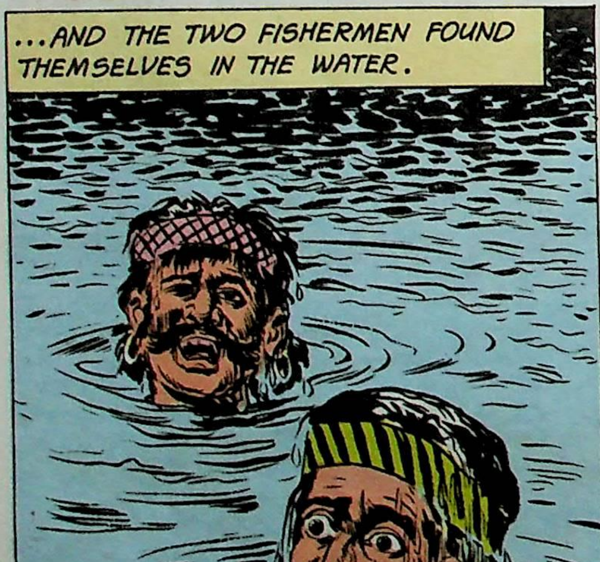

YOU ARE A REAL HELP TO ME, PARVATI.

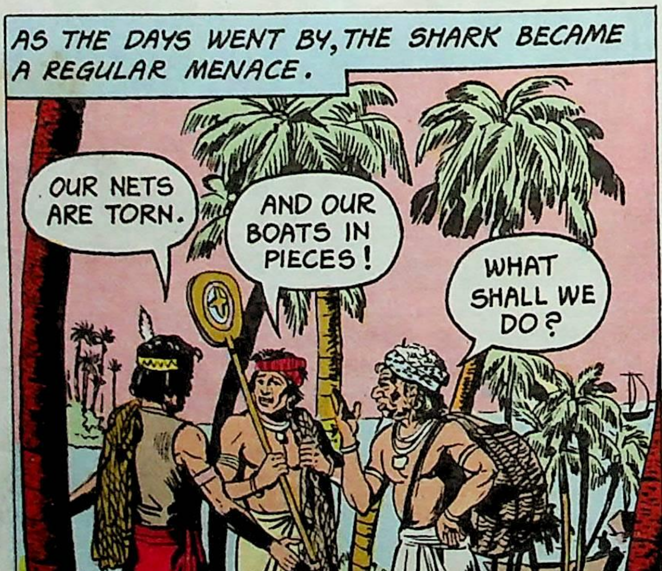

A PRETTY GIRL!
STRONG AND CLEVER TOO!
LUCKY IS THE MAN WHO WEDS HER!


MEANWHILE AT KAILASA —
NANDI, I CAN NO LONGER LIVE WITHOUT PARVATI!
MY LORD, WHY DON'T YOU GO DOWN TO EARTH AND CLAIM HER?
HOW CAN I, NANDI? SHE WILL NOW MARRY A FISHERMAN.
THEN I WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU ARE FORCED TO BECOME A FISHERMAN.
ASSUMING THE FORM OF A HUGE SHARK, NANDI HEADED FOR THE COAST WHERE THE PARAVARS LIVED.


A SHARK !
QUICK ! WE MUST GET IT !


BUT BEFORE THE FISHERMEN COULD ACT, THE SHARK ATTACKED...


...AND THE TWO FISHERMEN FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE WATER.


AS THE DAYS WENT BY, THE SHARK BECAME A REGULAR MENACE.
OUR NETS ARE TORN.
AND OUR BOATS IN PIECES !
WHAT SHALL WE DO ?

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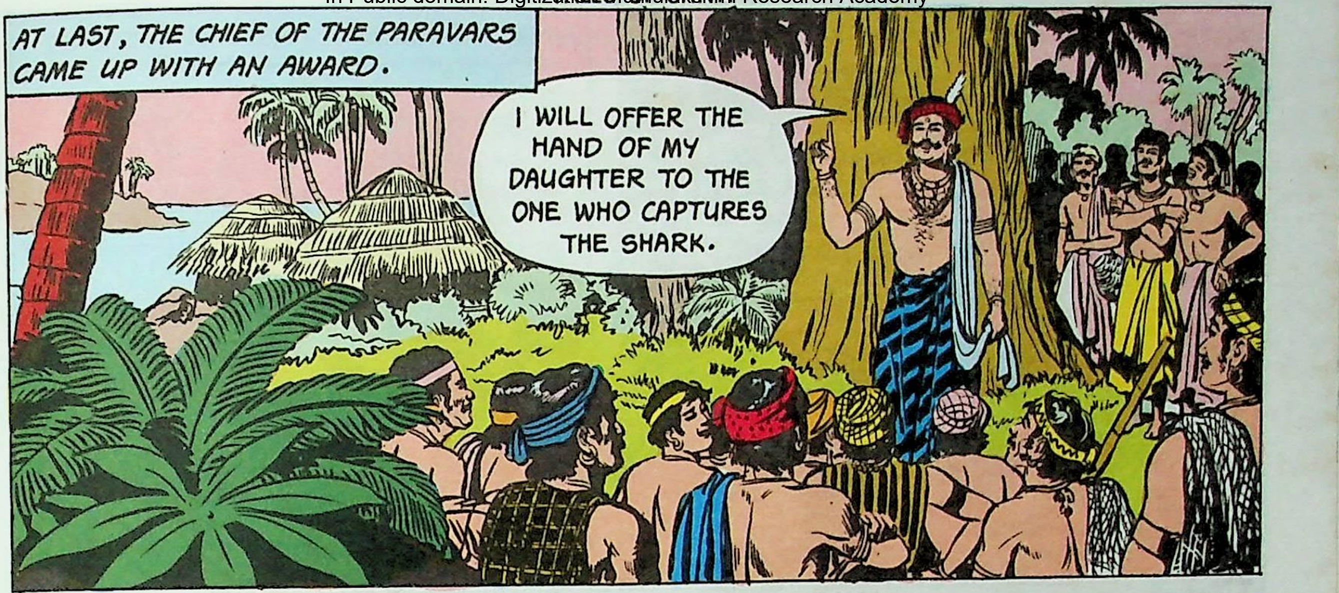
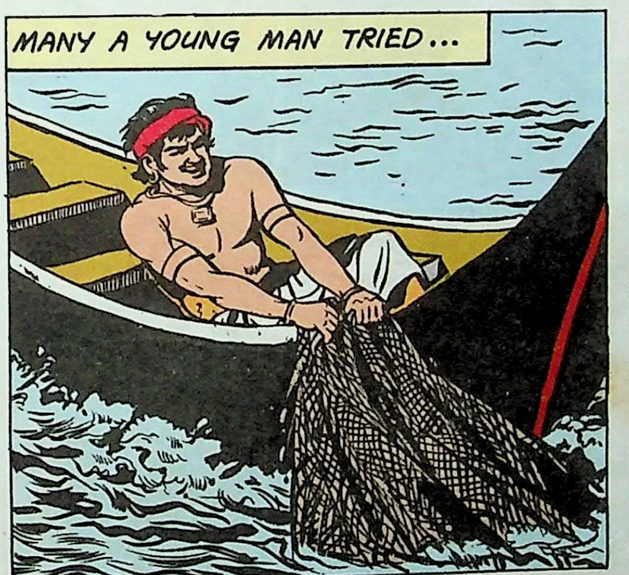
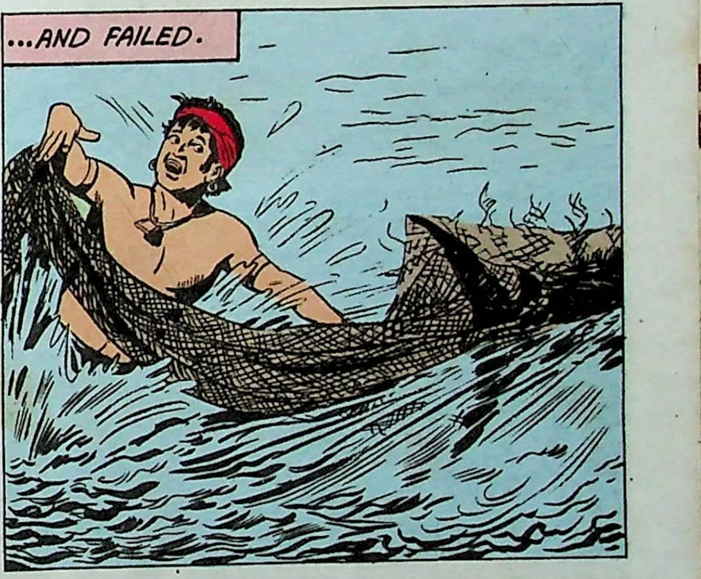
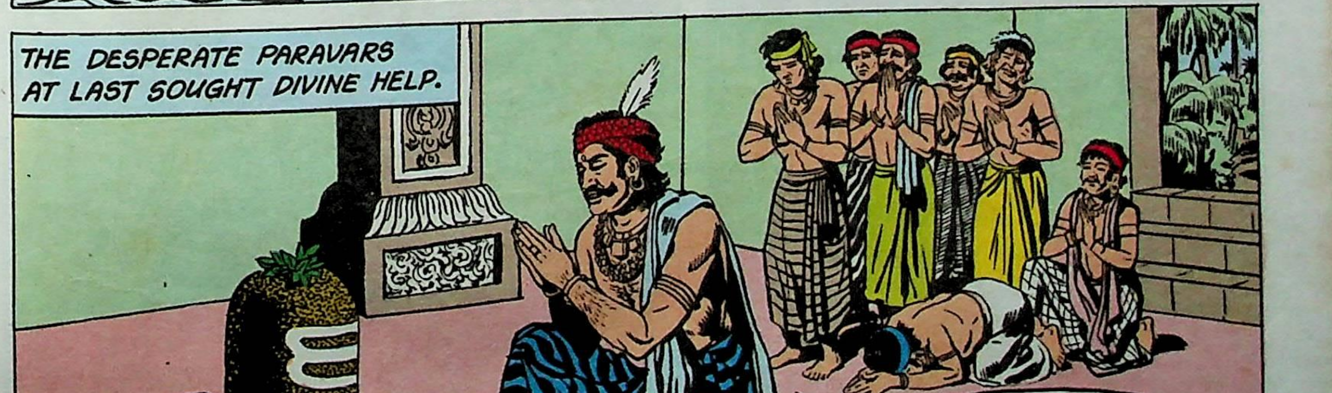
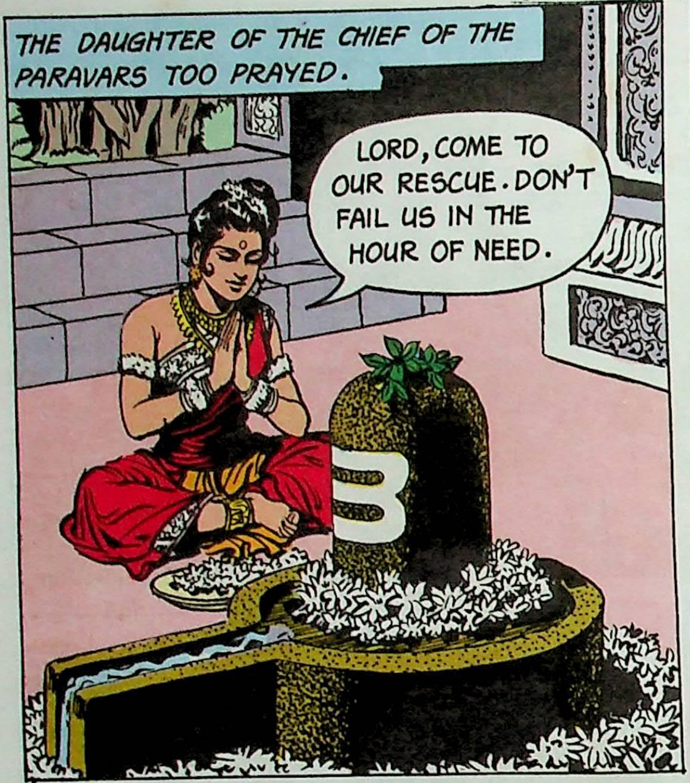
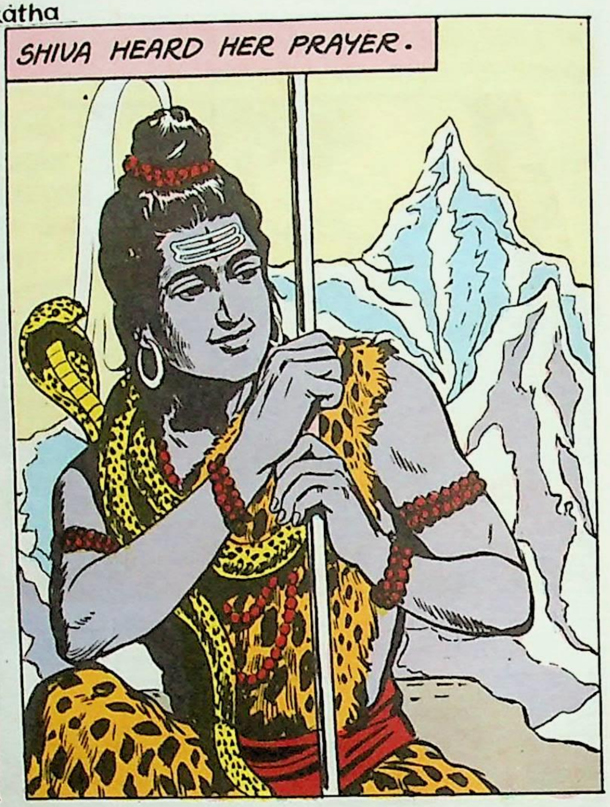

AT LAST, THE CHIEF OF THE PARAVARS CAME UP WITH AN AWARD.
I WILL OFFER THE HAND OF MY DAUGHTER TO THE ONE WHO CAPTURES THE SHARK.

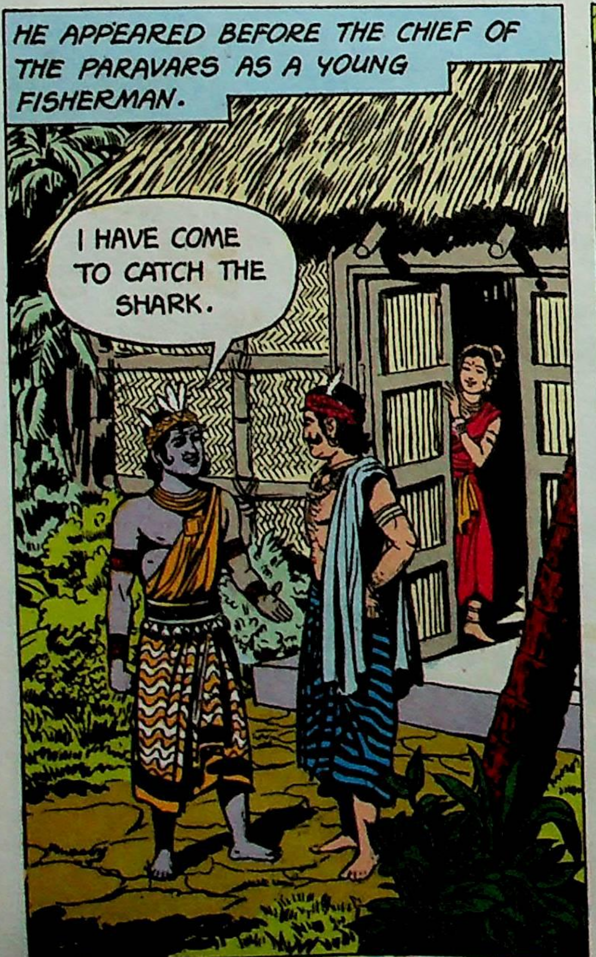

MANY A YOUNG MAN TRIED...

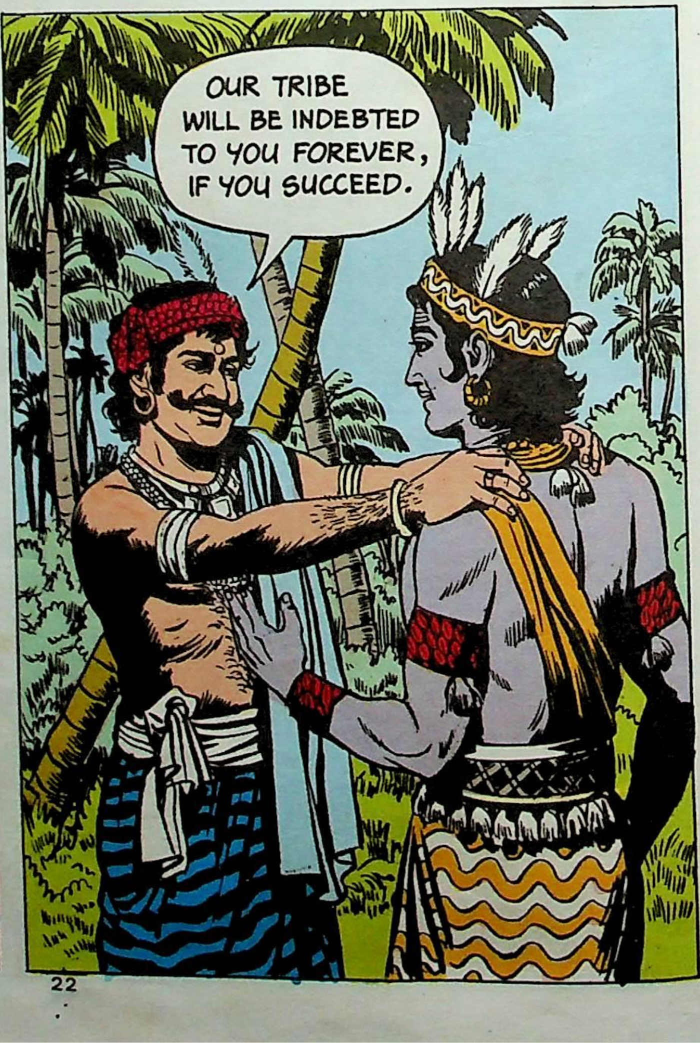


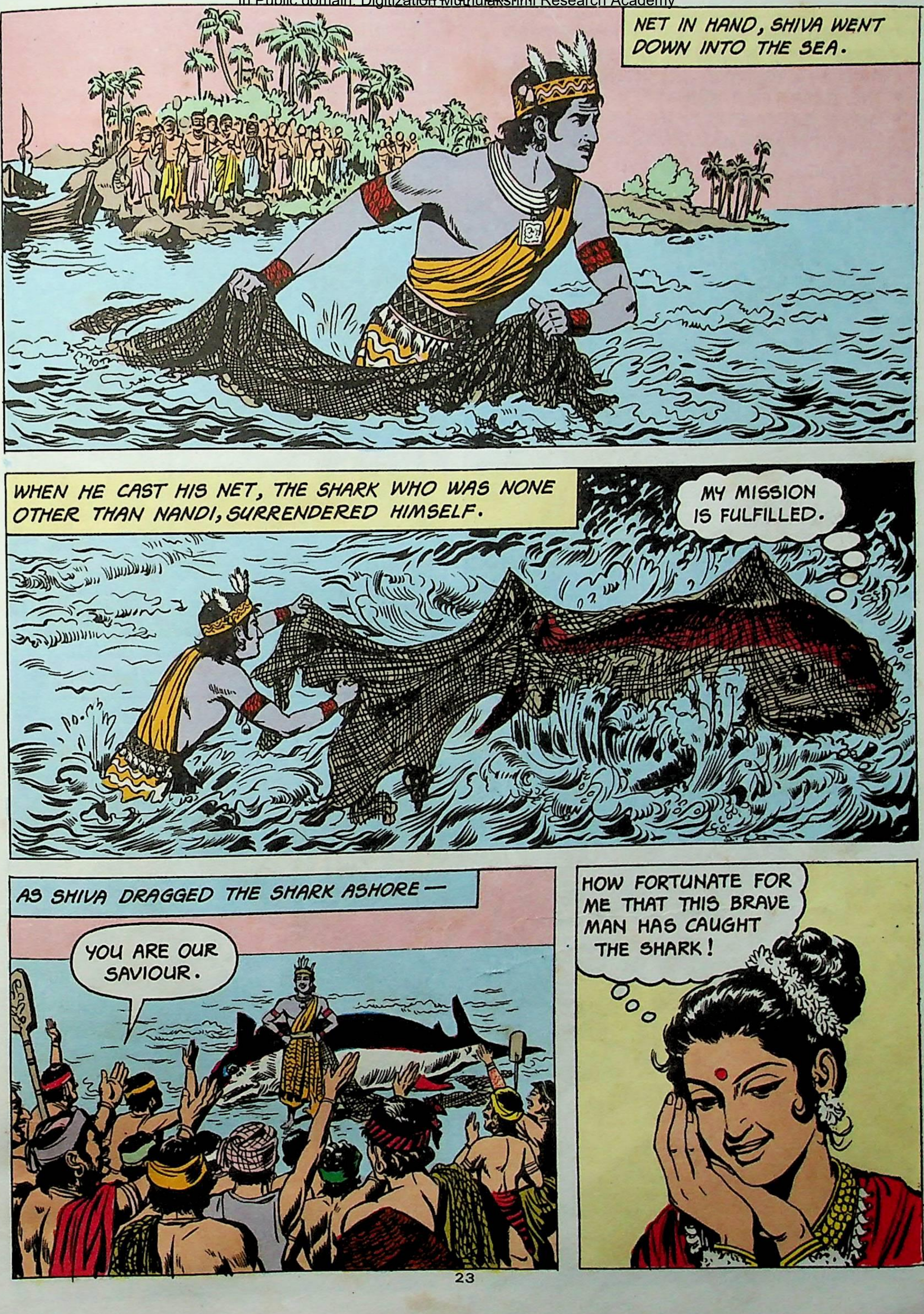

THE DESPERATE PARAVARS AT LAST SOUGHT DIVINE HELP.
O COMPASSIONATE ONE, SAVE US FROM THE SHARK.

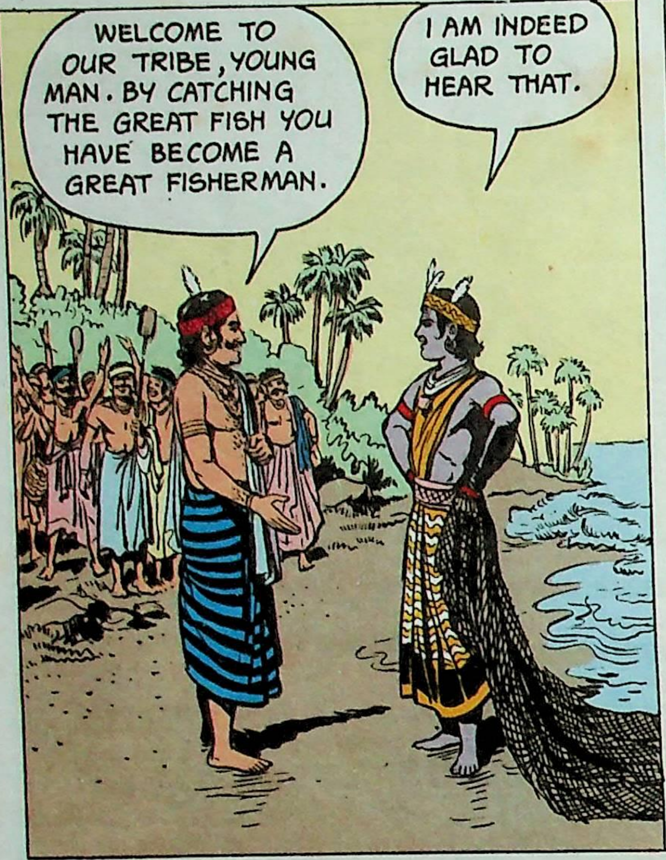

THE DAUGHTER OF THE CHIEF OF THE PARAVARS TOO PRAYED.
LORD, COME TO OUR RESCUE. DON'T FAIL US IN THE HOUR OF NEED.

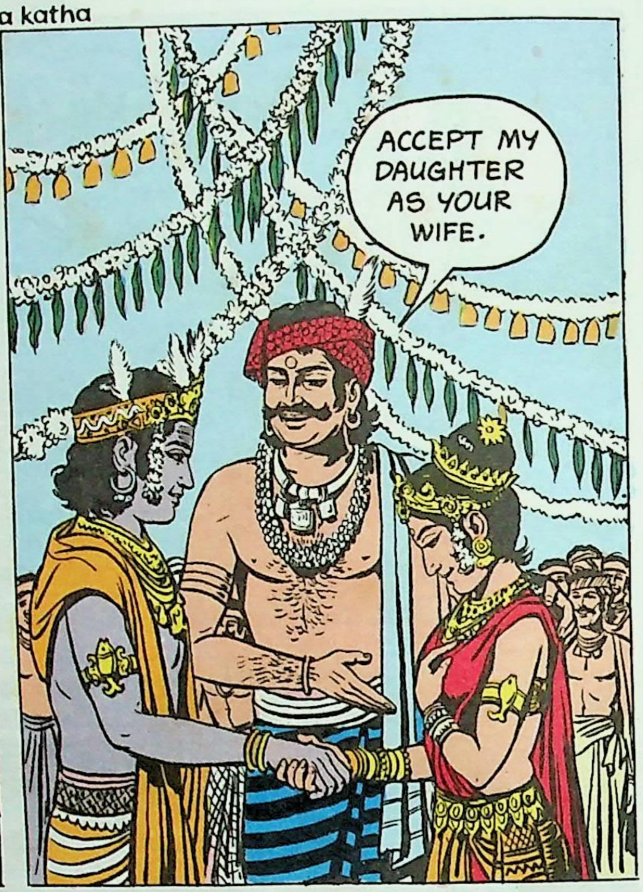

SHIVA HEARD HER PRAYER.


HE APPEARED BEFORE THE CHIEF OF THE PARAVARS AS A YOUNG FISHERMAN.
I HAVE COME TO CATCH THE SHARK.

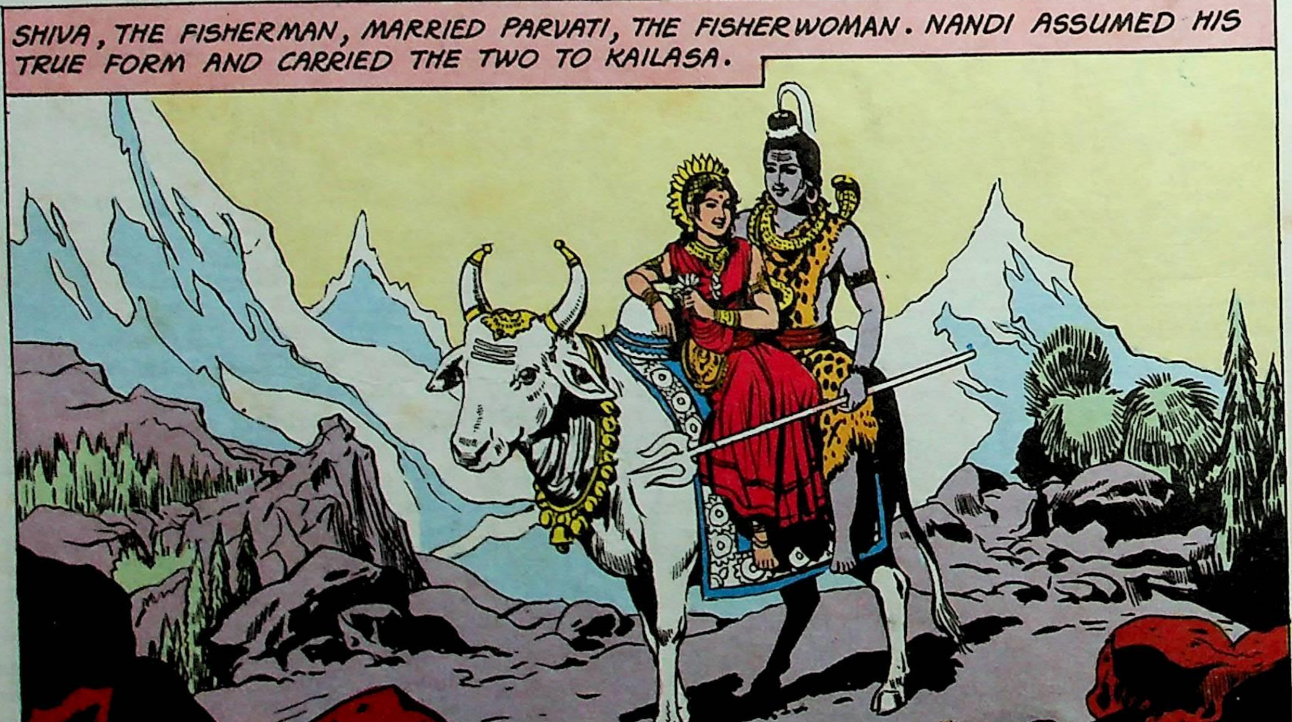

OUR TRIBE WILL BE INDEBTED TO YOU FOREVER, IF YOU SUCCEED.


NET IN HAND, SHIVA WENT DOWN INTO THE SEA.
WHEN HE CAST HIS NET, THE SHARK WHO WAS NONE OTHER THAN NANDI, SURRENDERED HIMSELF.
MY MISSION IS FULFILLED.
AS SHIVA DRAGGED THE SHARK ASHORE —
YOU ARE OUR SAVIOUR.
HOW FORTUNATE FOR ME THAT THIS BRAVE MAN HAS CAUGHT THE SHARK!

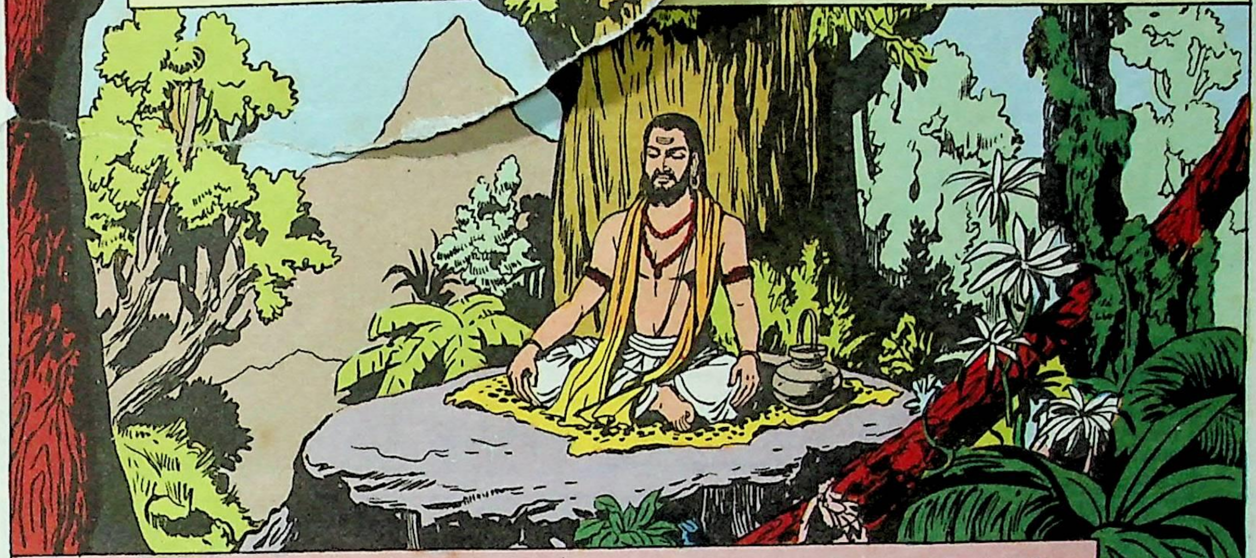

WELCOME TO OUR TRIBE, YOUNG MAN. BY CATCHING THE GREAT FISH YOU HAVE BECOME A GREAT FISHERMAN.
I AM INDEED GLAD TO HEAR THAT.


ACCEPT MY DAUGHTER AS YOUR WIFE.

SHIVA, THE FISHERMAN, MARRIED PARVATI, THE FISHERWOMAN. NANDI ASSUMED HIS TRUE FORM AND CARRIED THE TWO TO KAILASA.

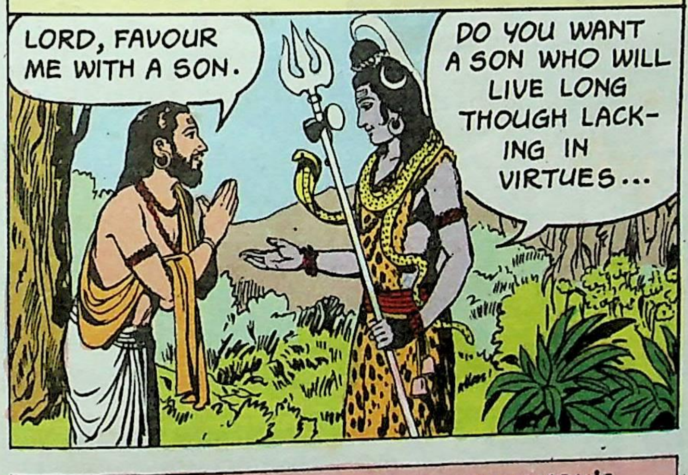


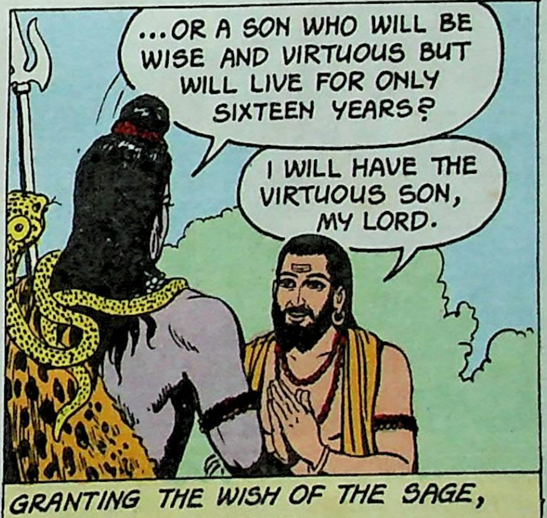
SHIVA AND MARKANDEYA



SAGE MRIKANDU OBSERVED SEVERE PENANCES TO PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA.

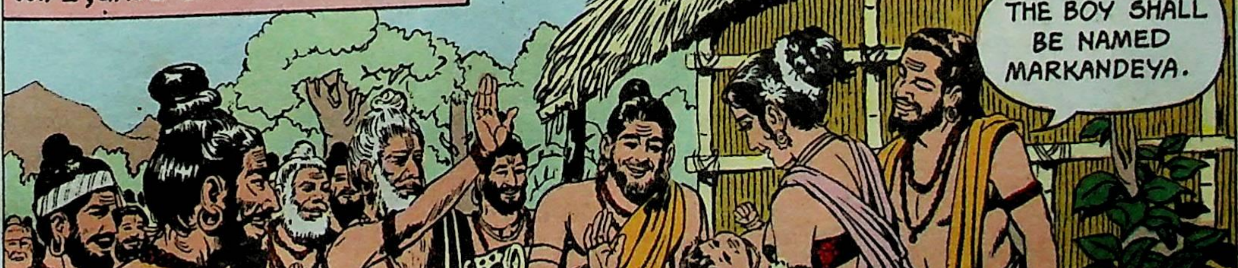
WHEN LORD SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE HIM—

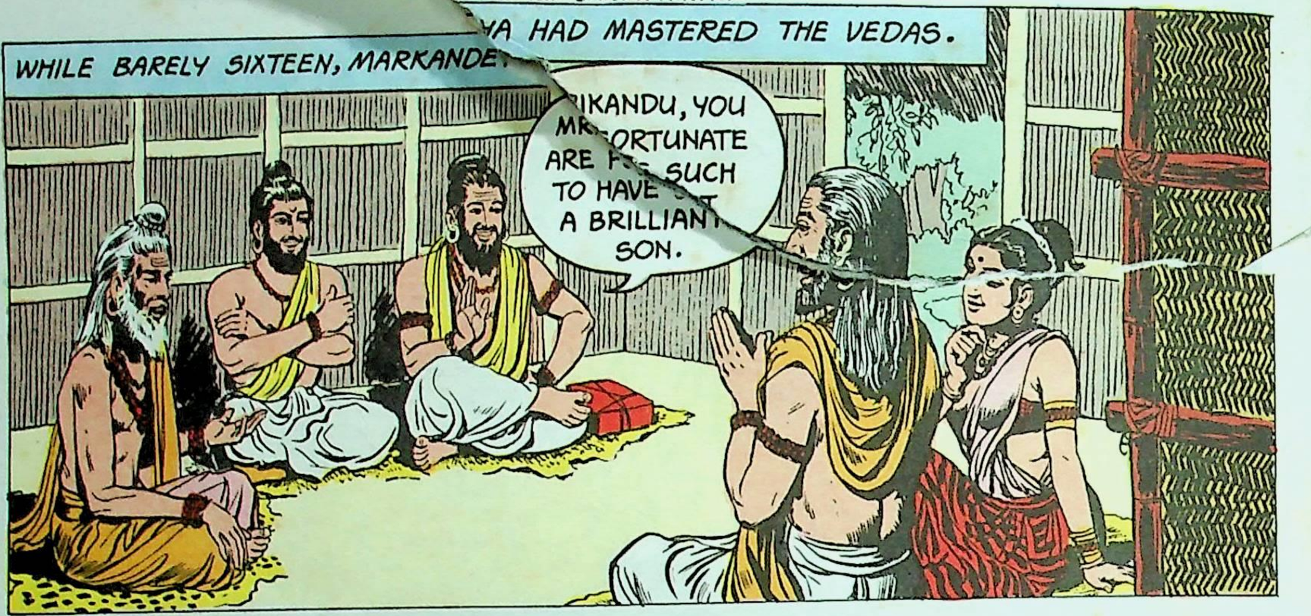

LORD, FAVOUR ME WITH A SON.
DO YOU WANT A SON WHO WILL LIVE LONG THOUGH LACKING IN VIRTUES...

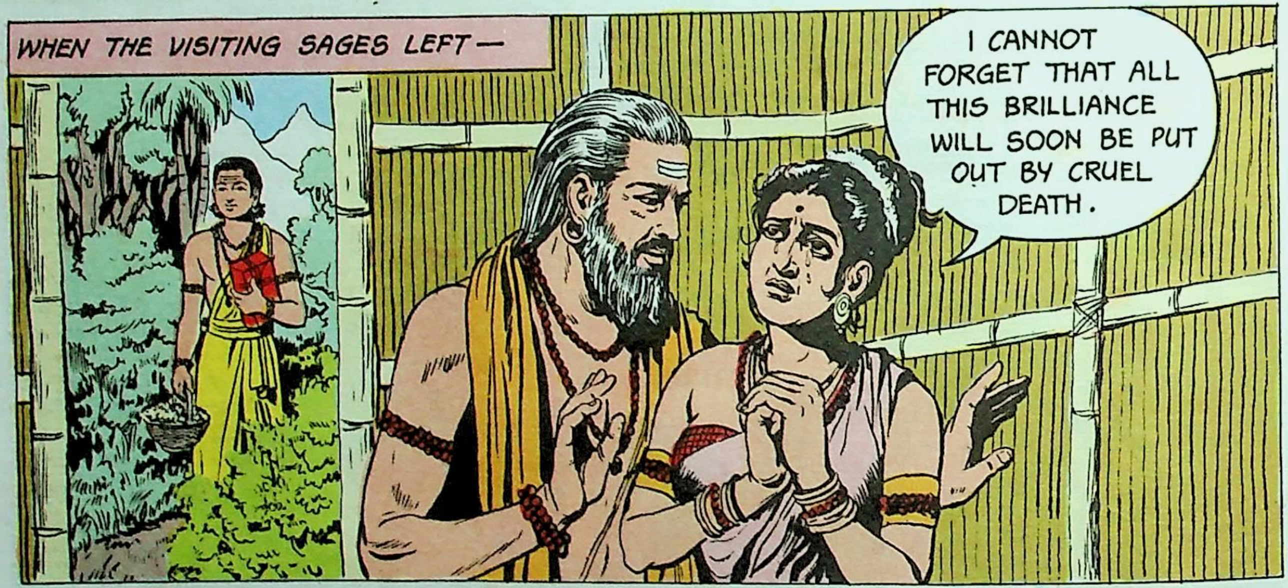

...OR A SON WHO WILL BE WISE AND VIRTUOUS BUT WILL LIVE FOR ONLY SIXTEEN YEARS?
I WILL HAVE THE VIRTUOUS SON, MY LORD.

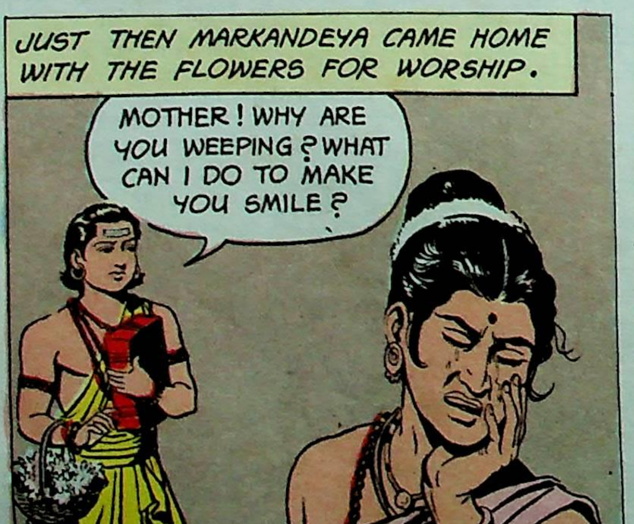
GRANTING THE WISH OF THE SAGE, LORD SHIVA VANISHED.

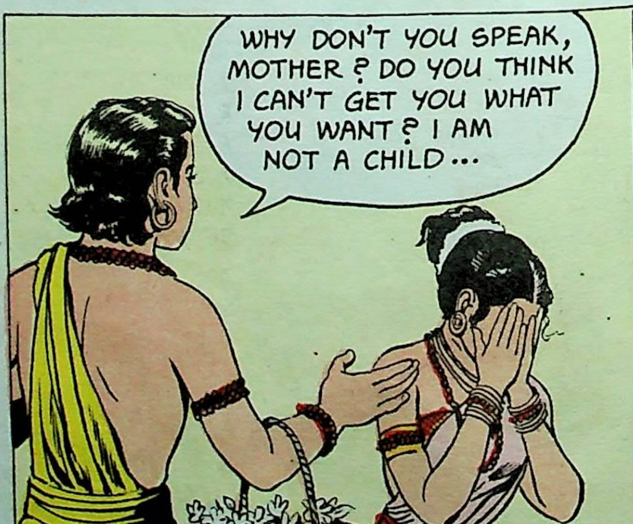
IN DUE COURSE, MARUDVATI, MRIKANDU'S WIFE, GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.

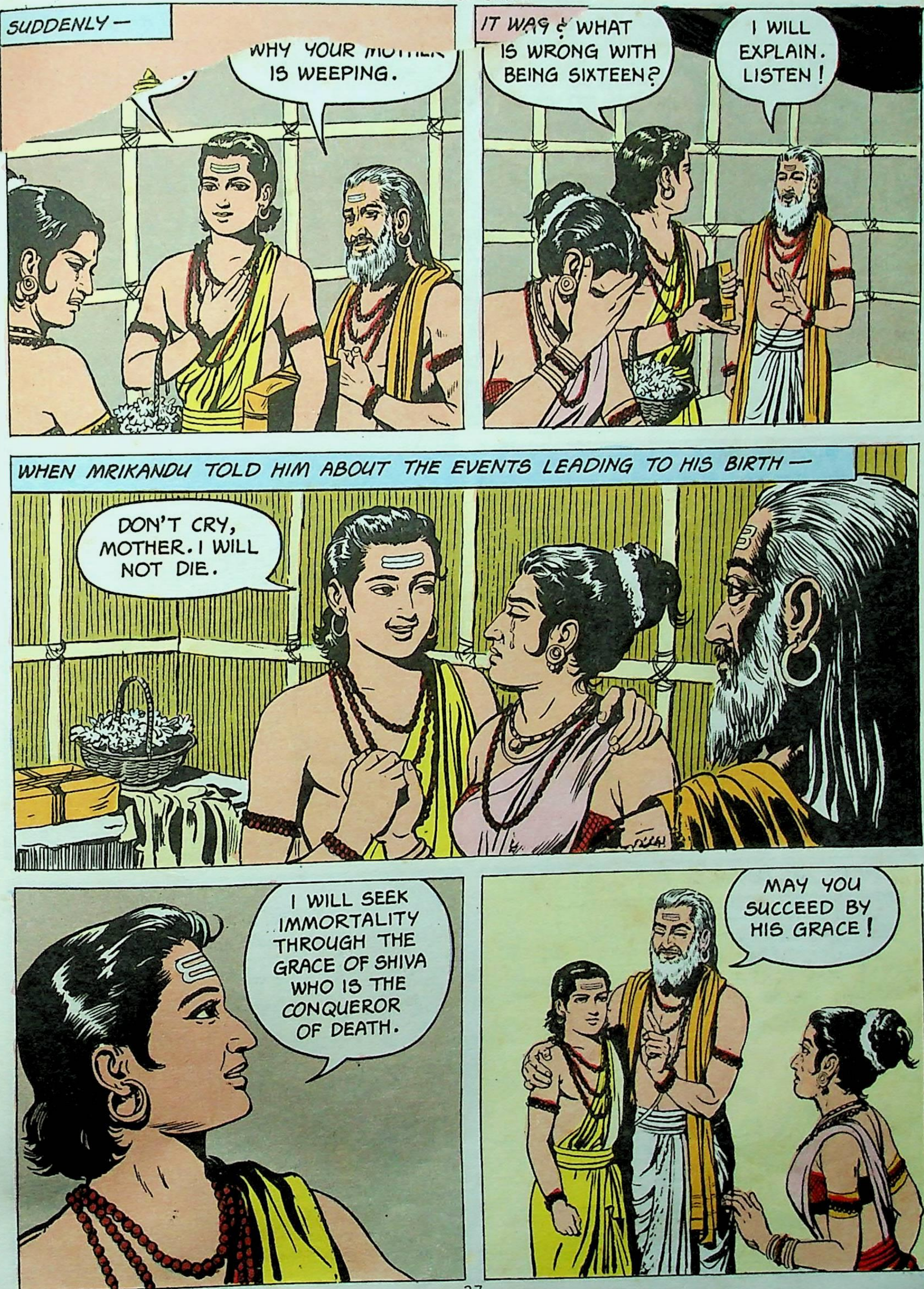

THE BOY SHALL BE NAMED MARKANDEYA.

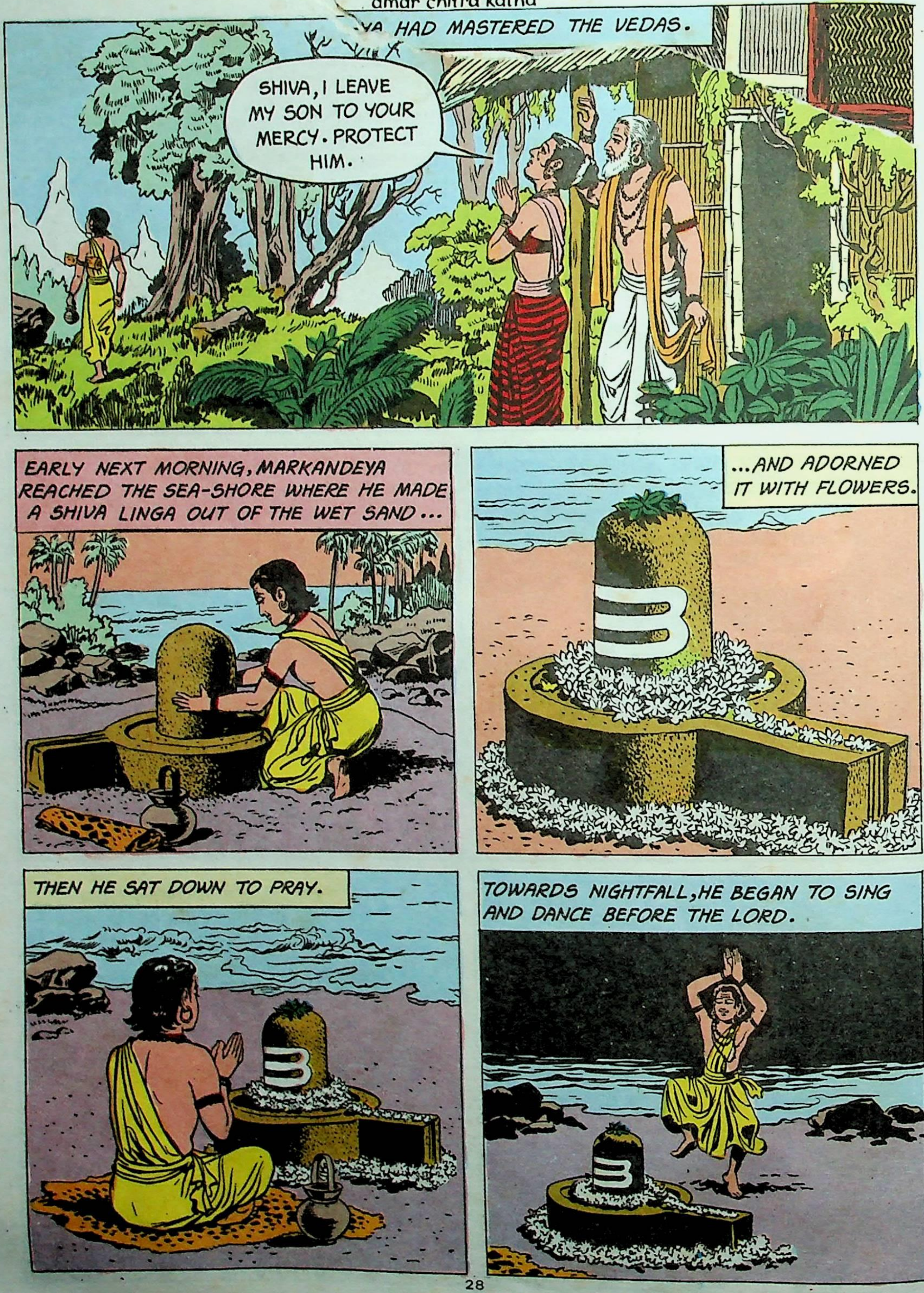

WHILE BARELY SIXTEEN, MARKANDE
YA HAD MASTERED THE VEDAS.
RIKANDU, YOU ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUCH A BRILLIANT SON.

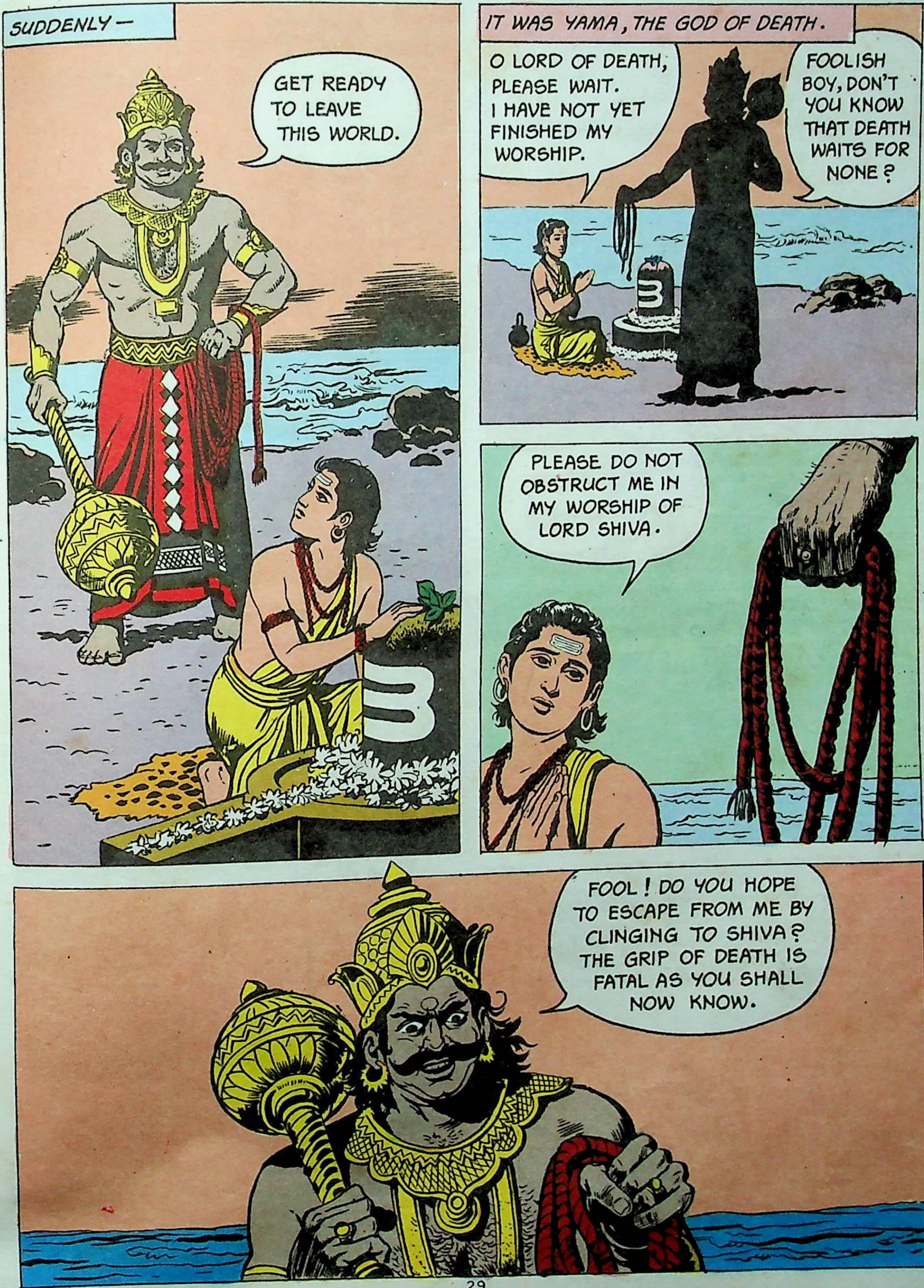

WHEN THE VISITING SAGES LEFT —
I CANNOT FORGET THAT ALL THIS BRILLIANCE WILL SOON BE PUT OUT BY CRUEL DEATH.

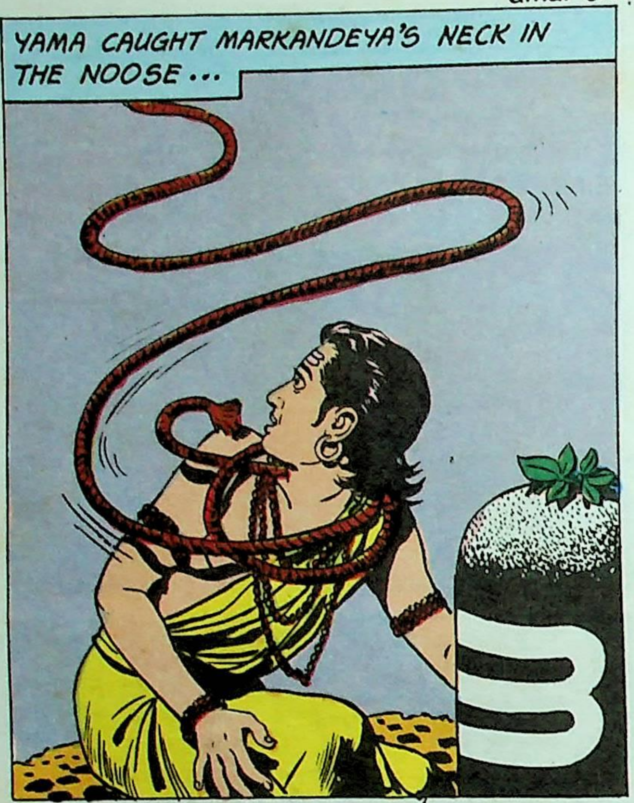

JUST THEN MARKANDEYA CAME HOME WITH THE FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP.
MOTHER ! WHY ARE YOU WEEPING ? WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE YOU SMILE ?

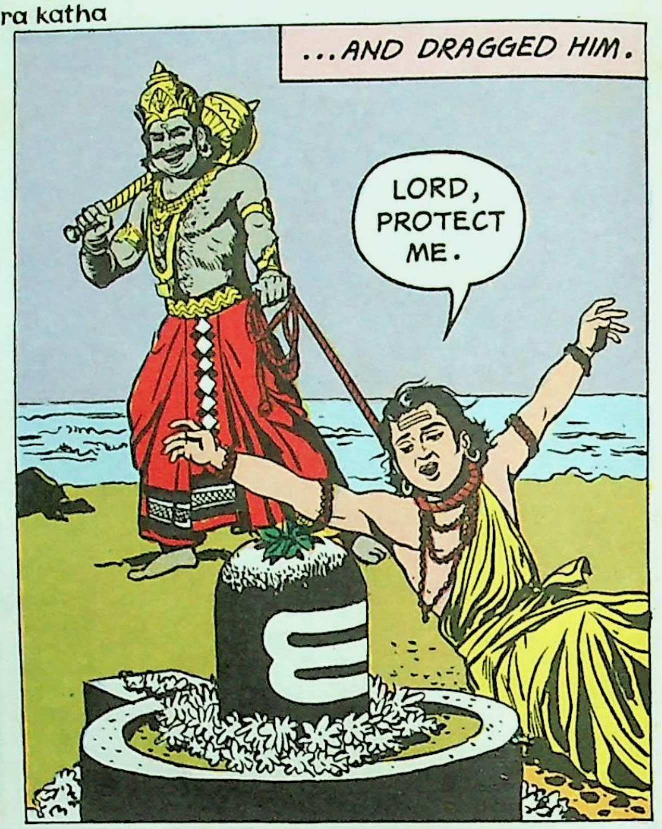

WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK, MOTHER ? DO YOU THINK I CAN'T GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT ? I AM NOT A CHILD ...

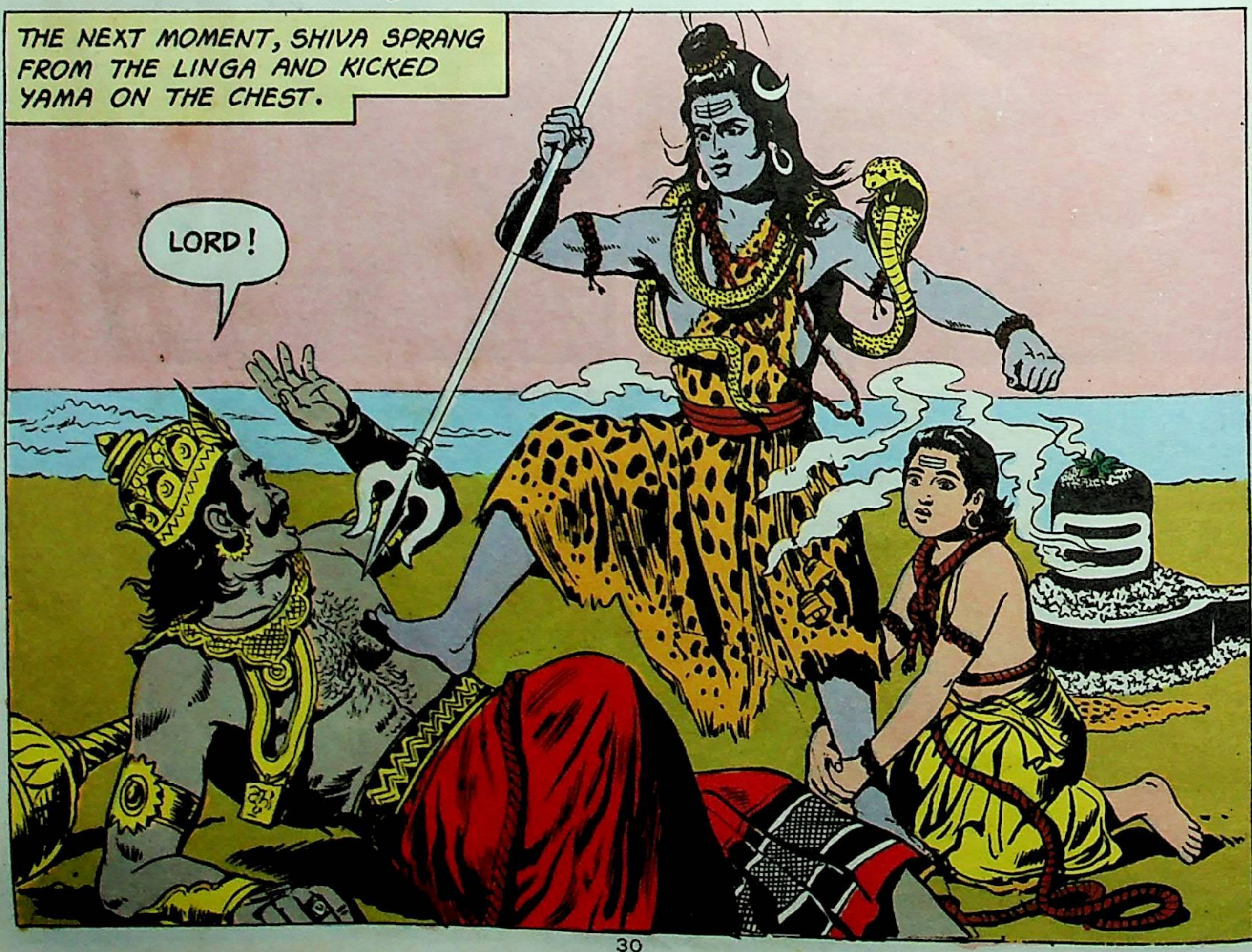

SUDDENLY —
WHY YOUR MOTHER IS WEEPING.
IT WAS WHAT IS WRONG WITH BEING SIXTEEN?
I WILL EXPLAIN. LISTEN!
WHEN MRIKANDU TOLD HIM ABOUT THE EVENTS LEADING TO HIS BIRTH —
DON'T CRY, MOTHER. I WILL NOT DIE.
I WILL SEEK IMMORTALITY THROUGH THE GRACE OF SHIVA WHO IS THE CONQUEROR OF DEATH.
MAY YOU SUCCEED BY HIS GRACE!

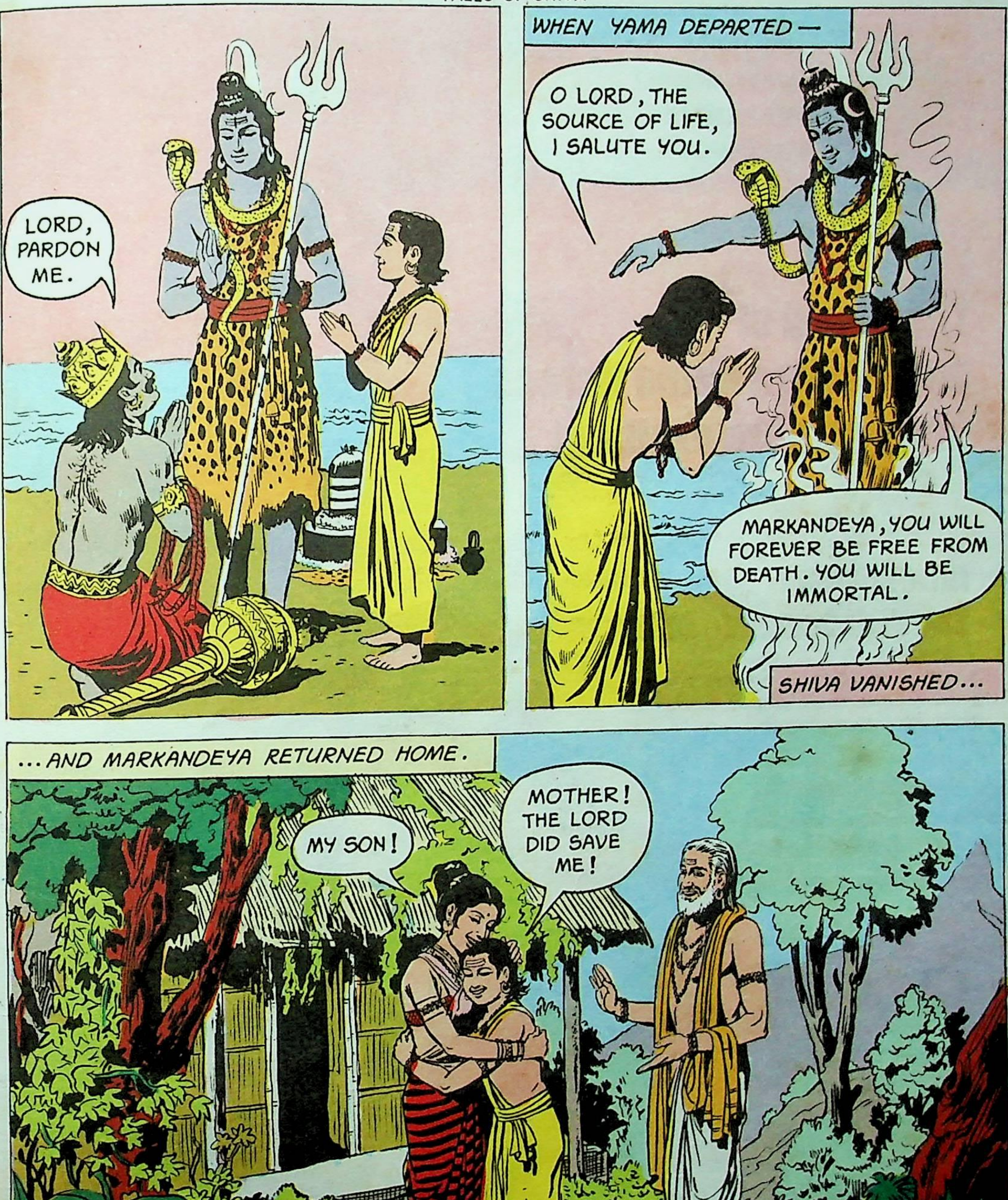

YA HAD MASTERED THE VEDAS.
SHIVA, I LEAVE MY SON TO YOUR MERCY. PROTECT HIM.
EARLY NEXT MORNING, MARKANDEYA REACHED THE SEA-SHORE WHERE HE MADE A SHIVA LINGA OUT OF THE WET SAND...
...AND ADORNED IT WITH FLOWERS.
THEN HE SAT DOWN TO PRAY.
TOWARDS NIGHTFALL, HE BEGAN TO SING AND DANCE BEFORE THE LORD.


SUDDENLY —
GET READY TO LEAVE THIS WORLD.
IT WAS YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH.
O LORD OF DEATH, PLEASE WAIT. I HAVE NOT YET FINISHED MY WORSHIP.
FOOLISH BOY, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT DEATH WAITS FOR NONE ?
PLEASE DO NOT OBSTRUCT ME IN MY WORSHIP OF LORD SHIVA.
FOOL ! DO YOU HOPE TO ESCAPE FROM ME BY CLINGING TO SHIVA ? THE GRIP OF DEATH IS FATAL AS YOU SHALL NOW KNOW.


YAMA CAUGHT MARKANDEYA'S NECK IN THE NOOSE ...


... AND DRAGGED HIM.
LORD, PROTECT ME.


THE NEXT MOMENT, SHIVA SPRANG FROM THE LINGA AND KICKED YAMA ON THE CHEST.
LORD!


LORD, PARDON ME.
WHEN YAMA DEPARTED —
O LORD, THE SOURCE OF LIFE, I SALUTE YOU.
MARKANDEYA, YOU WILL FOREVER BE FREE FROM DEATH. YOU WILL BE IMMORTAL.
SHIVA VANISHED...
...AND MARKANDEYA RETURNED HOME.
MY SON!
MOTHER! THE LORD DID SAVE ME!

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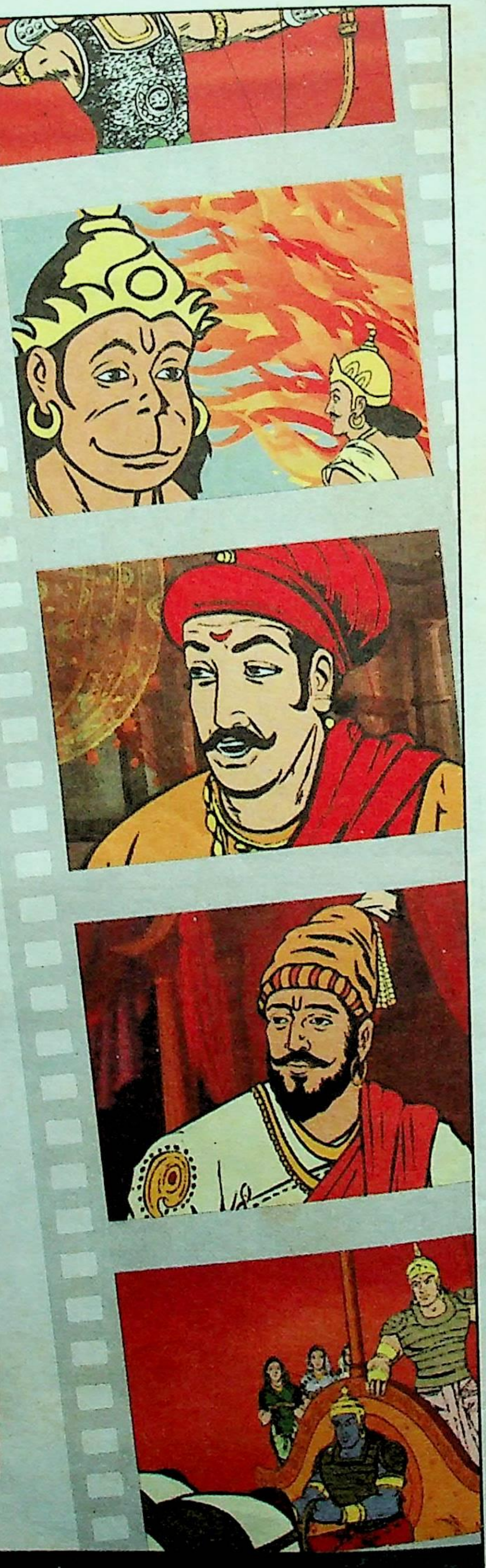

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SURYA

Sanjna basked in the warmth of her husband, the radiant Sun God, Surya. But sometimes, the sun's glare got uncomfortably fierce, and Sanjna could not bear it. She devised the perfect cover for herself – Chhaya, her mirror image! Away from the blazing Surya, the lonely Sanjna pined for her beloved. Eventually, a way had to be found to ensure everyone's happiness.

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Illustrations
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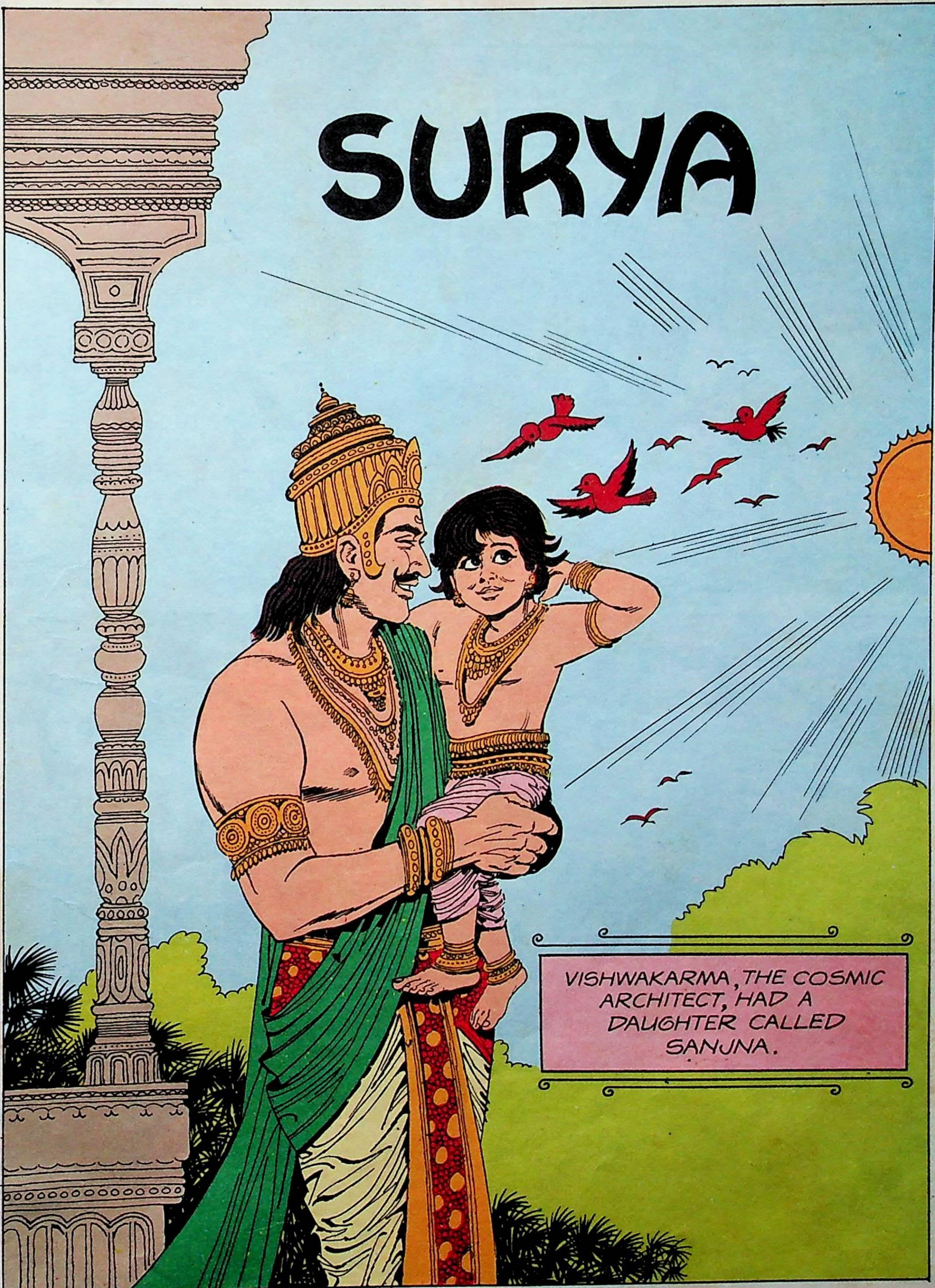
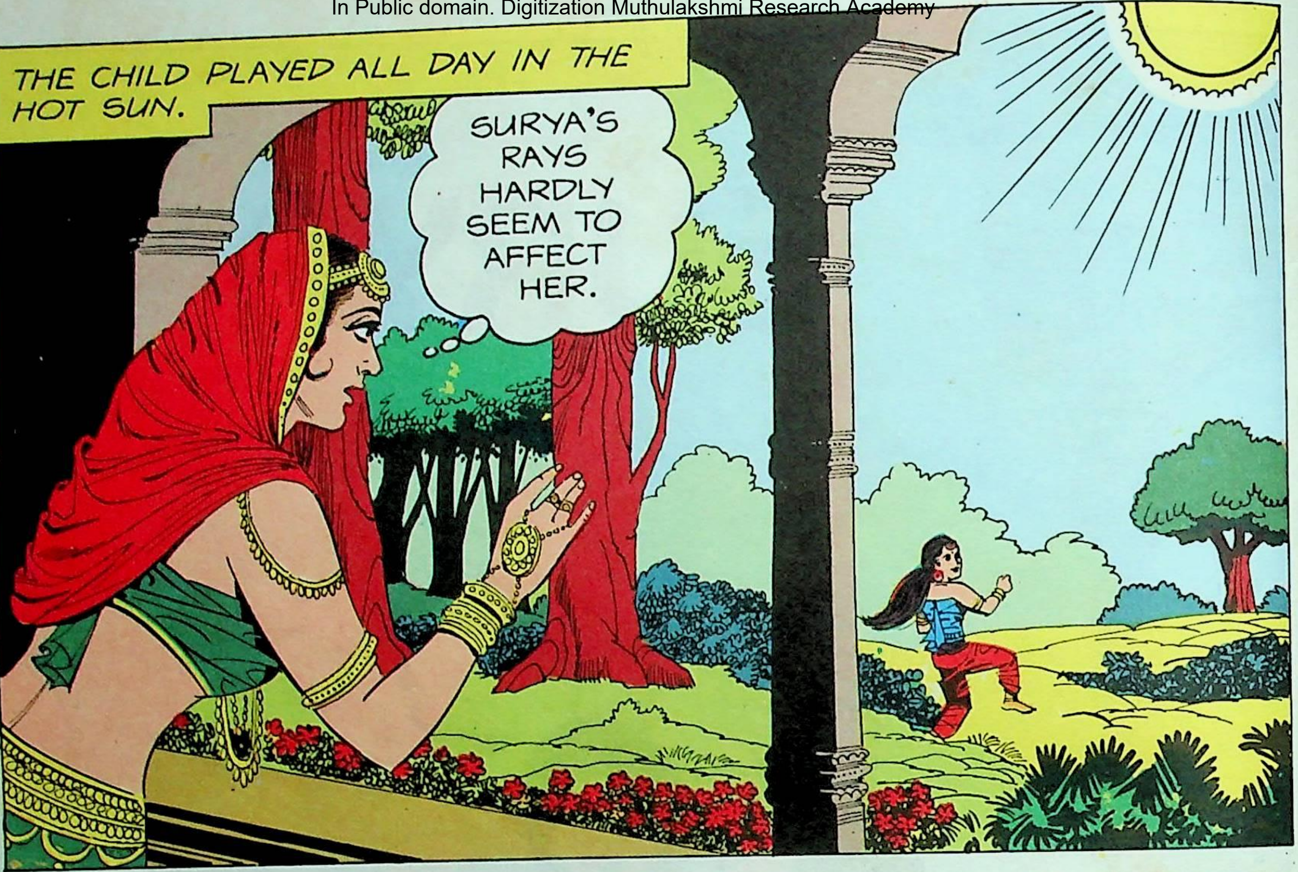
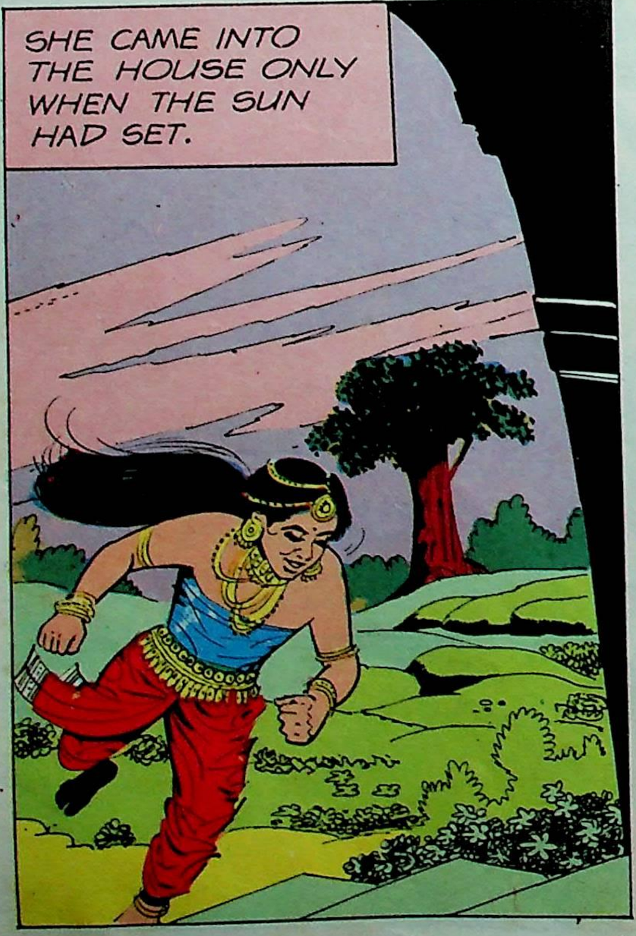
Editor
Anant Pai

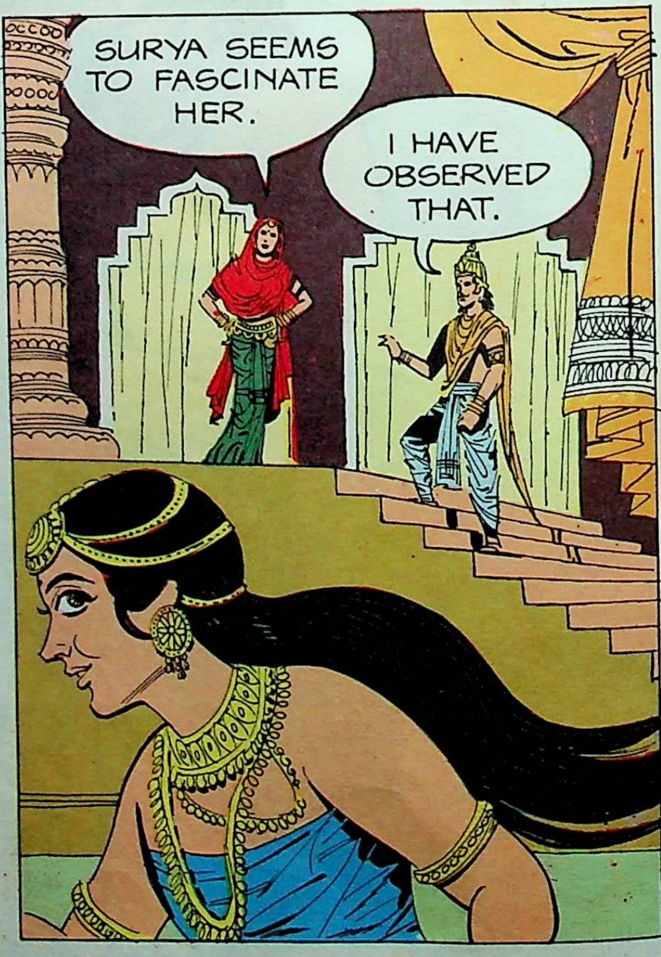
SURYA

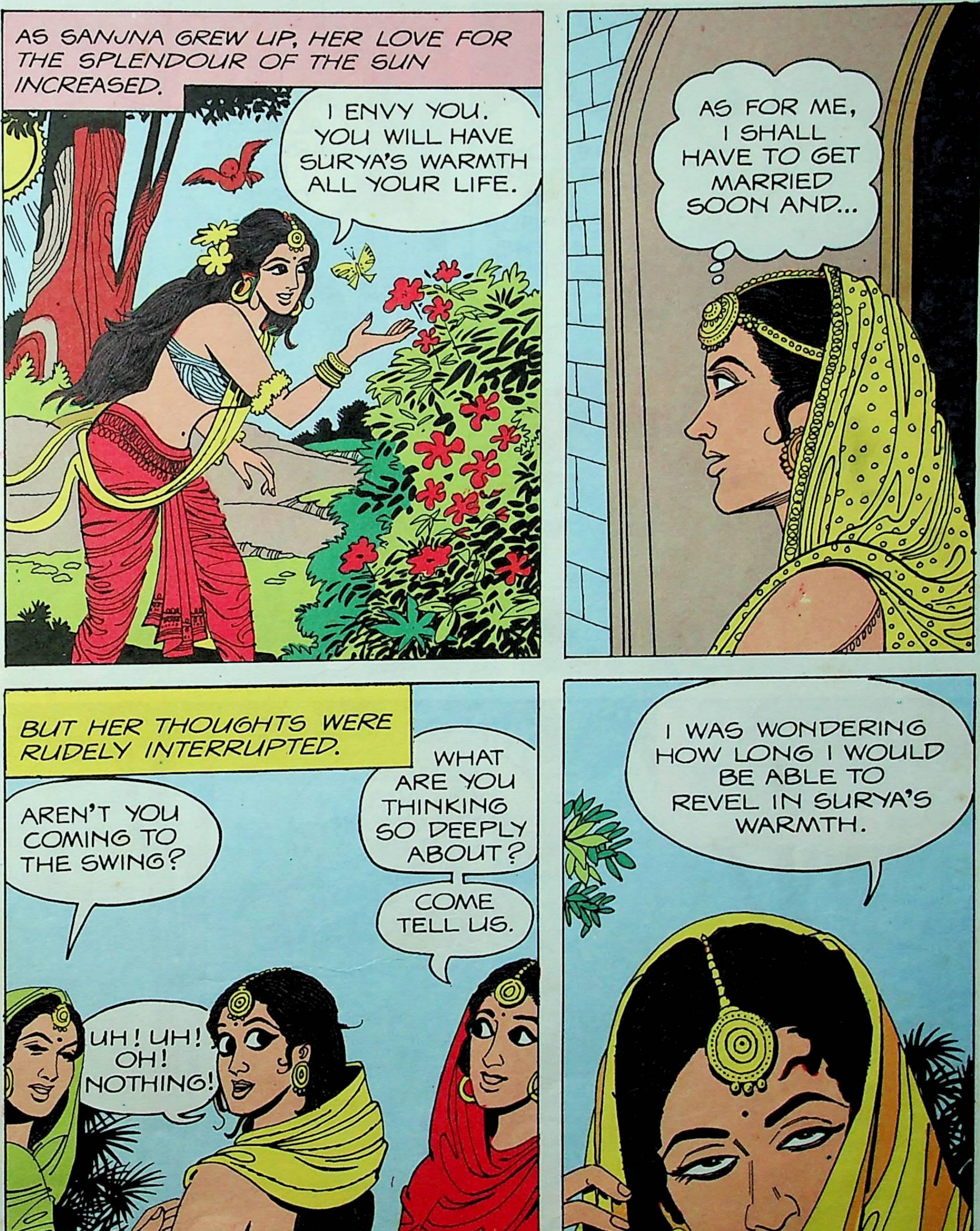


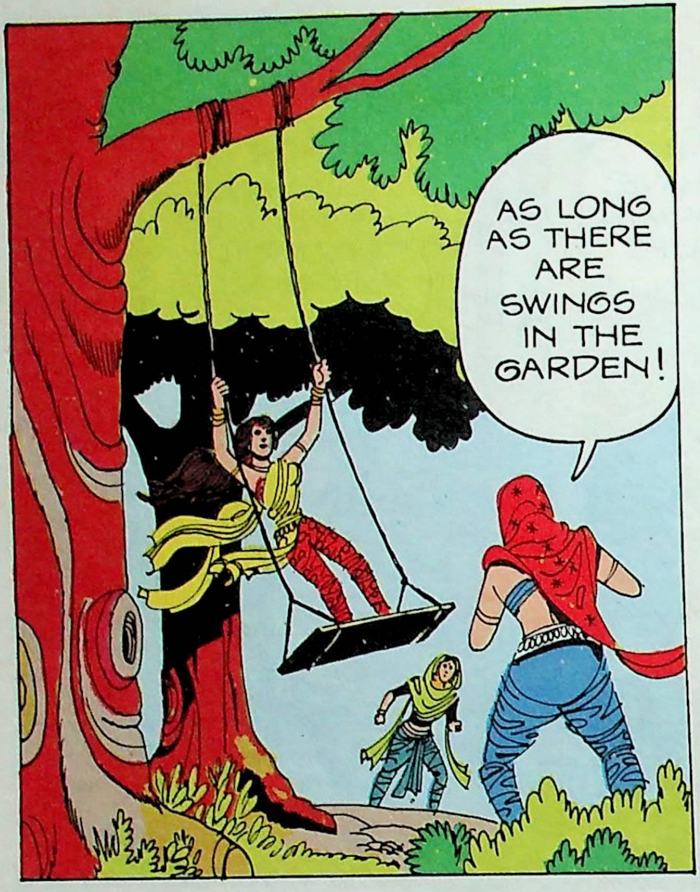
VISHWAKARMA, THE COSMIC ARCHITECT, HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED SANJUNA.

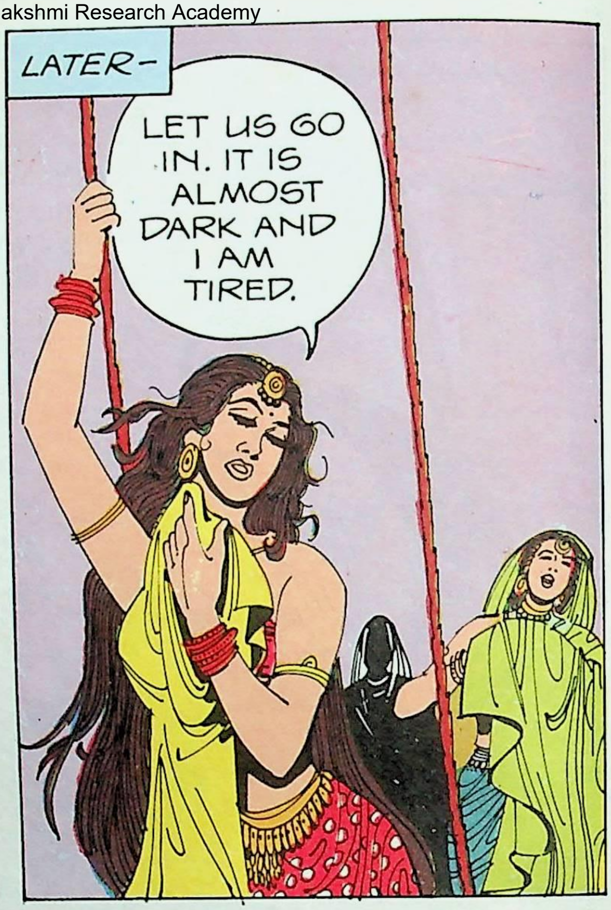

THE CHILD PLAYED ALL DAY IN THE HOT SUN.
SURYA'S RAYS HARDLY SEEM TO AFFECT HER.

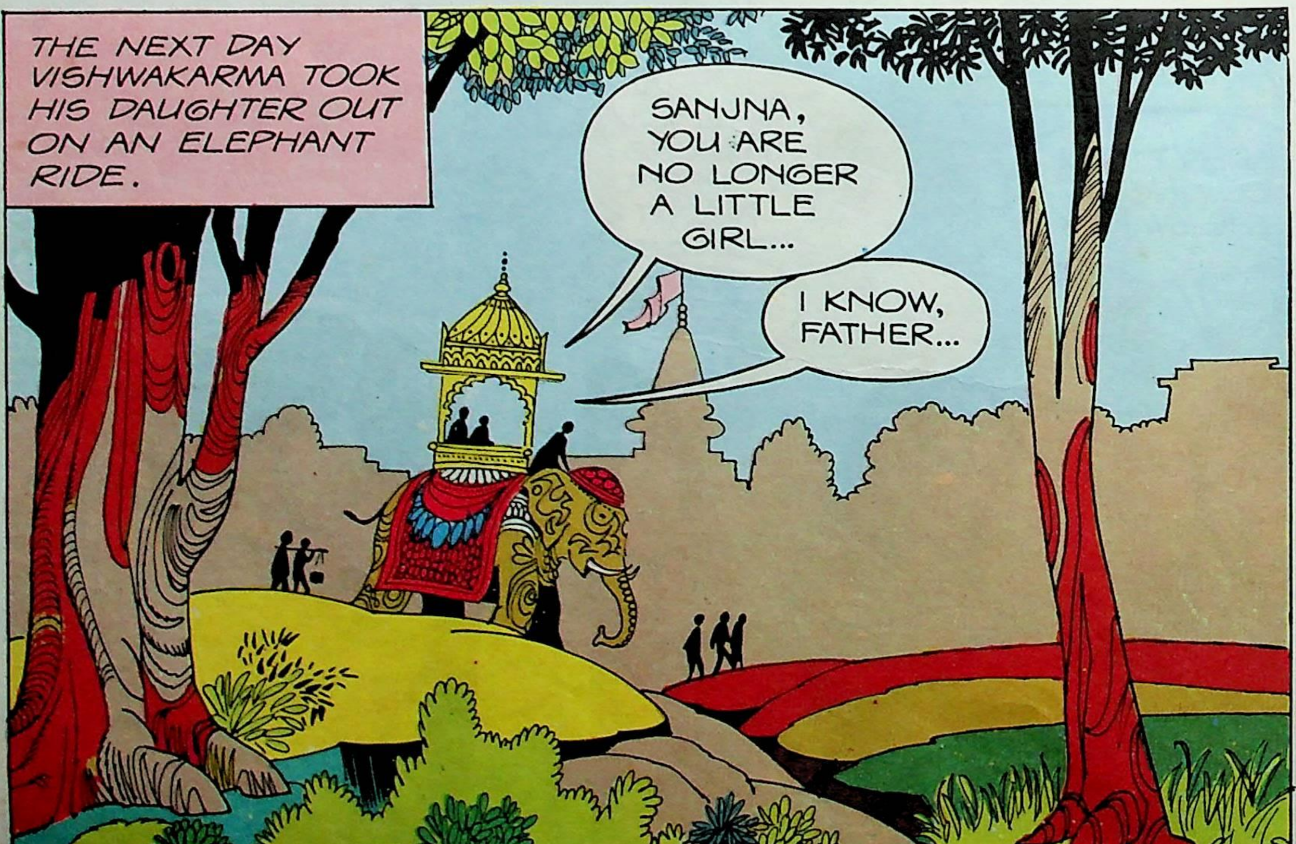

SHE CAME INTO THE HOUSE ONLY WHEN THE SUN HAD SET.

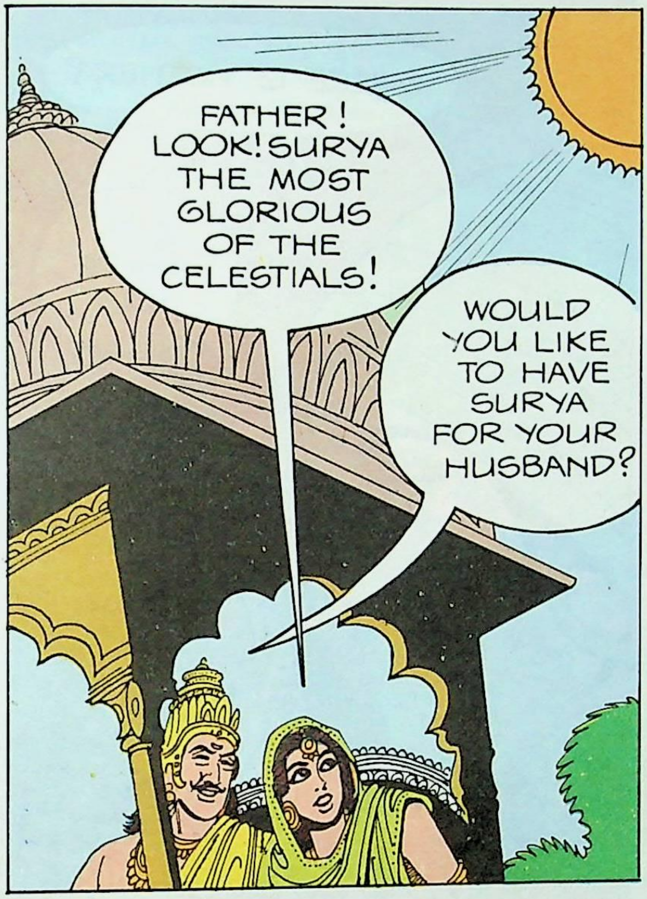

SURYA SEEMS TO FASCINATE HER.
I HAVE OBSERVED THAT.

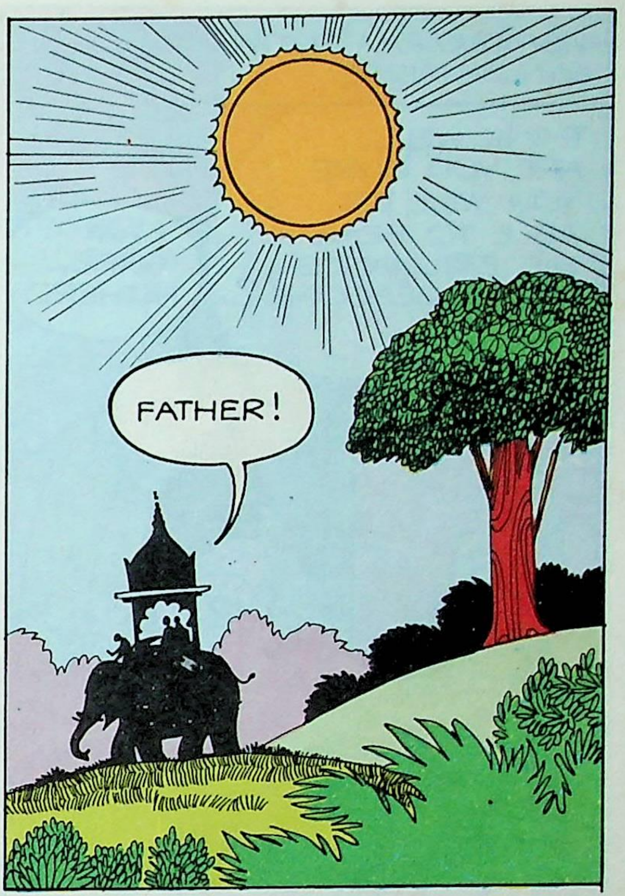

AS SANJNA GREW UP, HER LOVE FOR THE SPLENDOUR OF THE SUN INCREASED.
I ENVY YOU. YOU WILL HAVE SURYA'S WARMTH ALL YOUR LIFE.
AS FOR ME, I SHALL HAVE TO GET MARRIED SOON AND...
BUT HER THOUGHTS WERE RUDELY INTERRUPTED.
AREN'T YOU COMING TO THE SWING?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING SO DEEPLY ABOUT?
COME TELL US.
UH! UH! OH! NOTHING!
I WAS WONDERING HOW LONG I WOULD BE ABLE TO REVEL IN SURYA'S WARMTH.

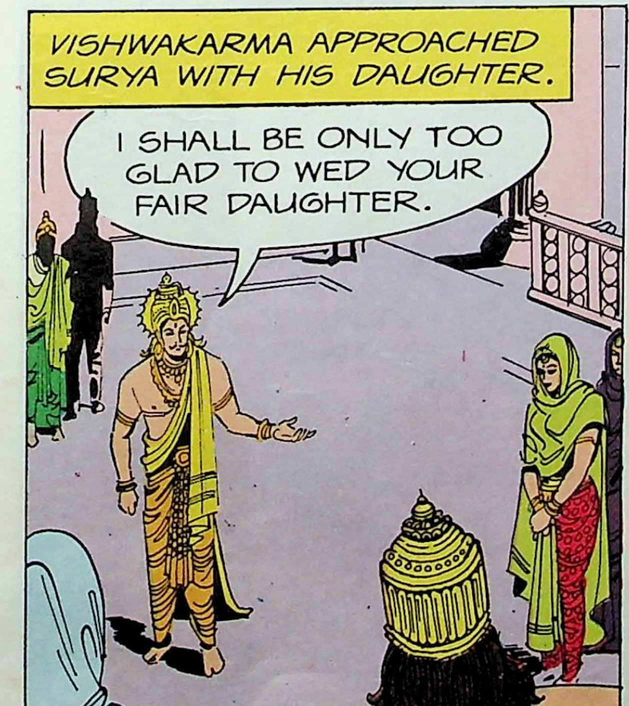

AS LONG AS THERE ARE SWINGS IN THE GARDEN!


LATER-
LET US GO IN. IT IS ALMOST DARK AND I AM TIRED.

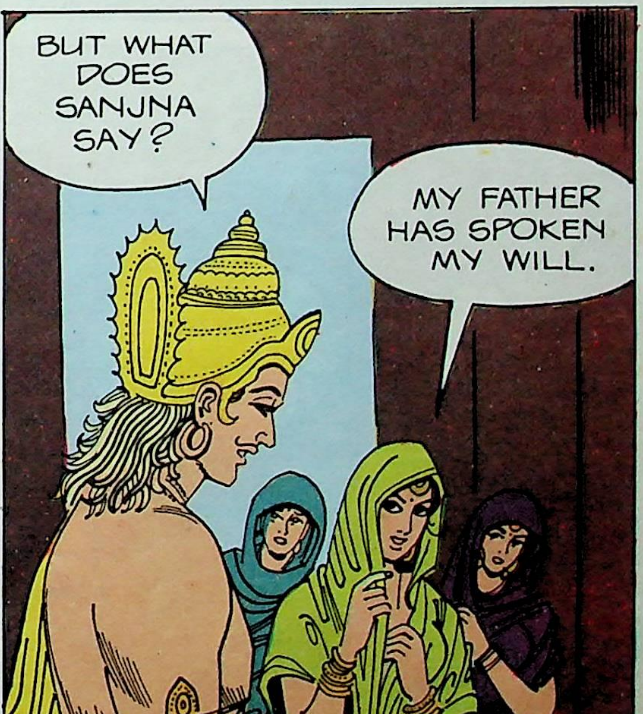

THE NEXT DAY VISHWAKARMA TOOK HIS DAUGHTER OUT ON AN ELEPHANT RIDE.
SANJUNA, YOU ARE NO LONGER A LITTLE GIRL...
I KNOW, FATHER...

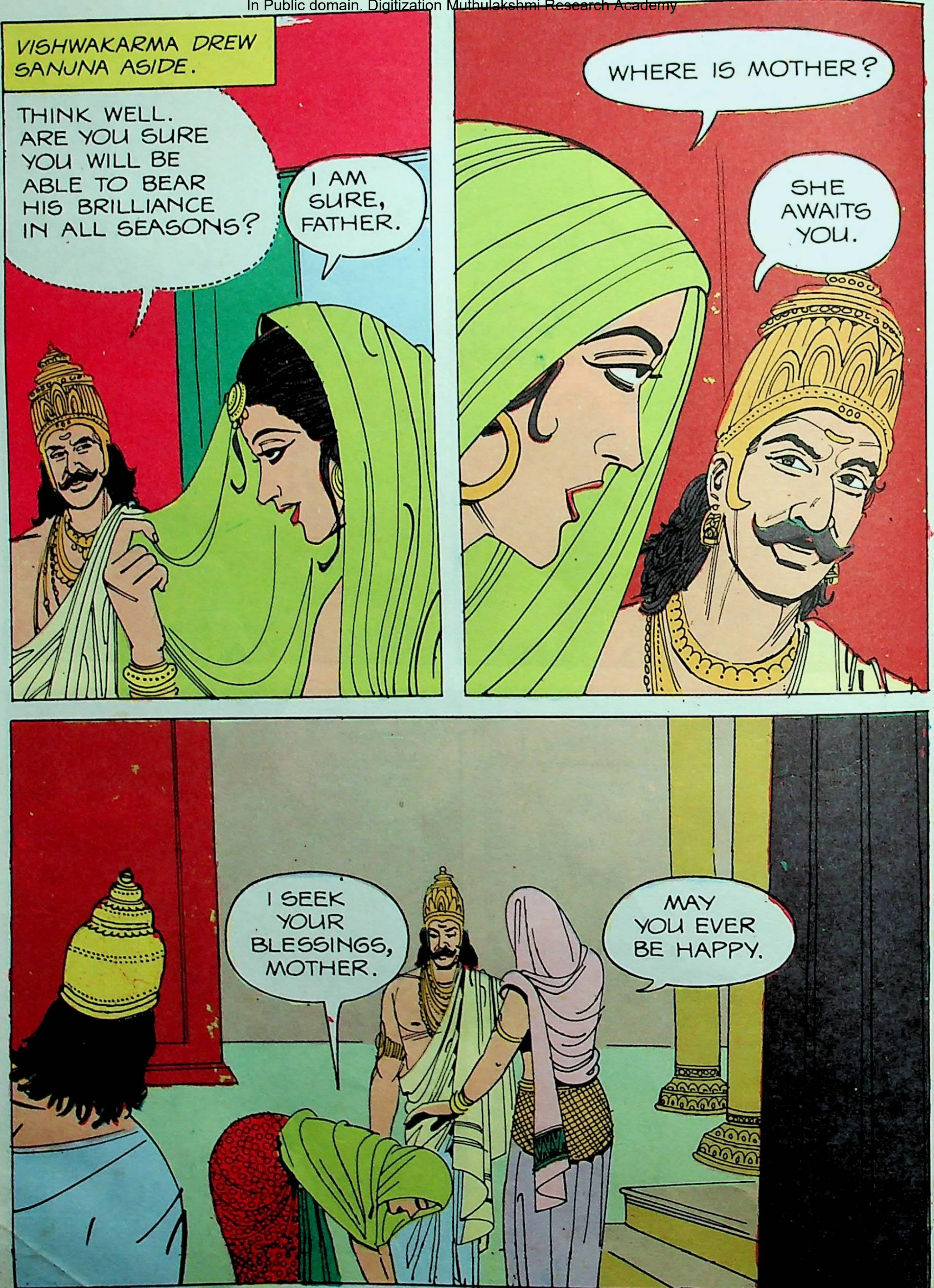

FATHER! LOOK! SURYA THE MOST GLORIOUS OF THE CELESTIALS!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE SURYA FOR YOUR HUSBAND?



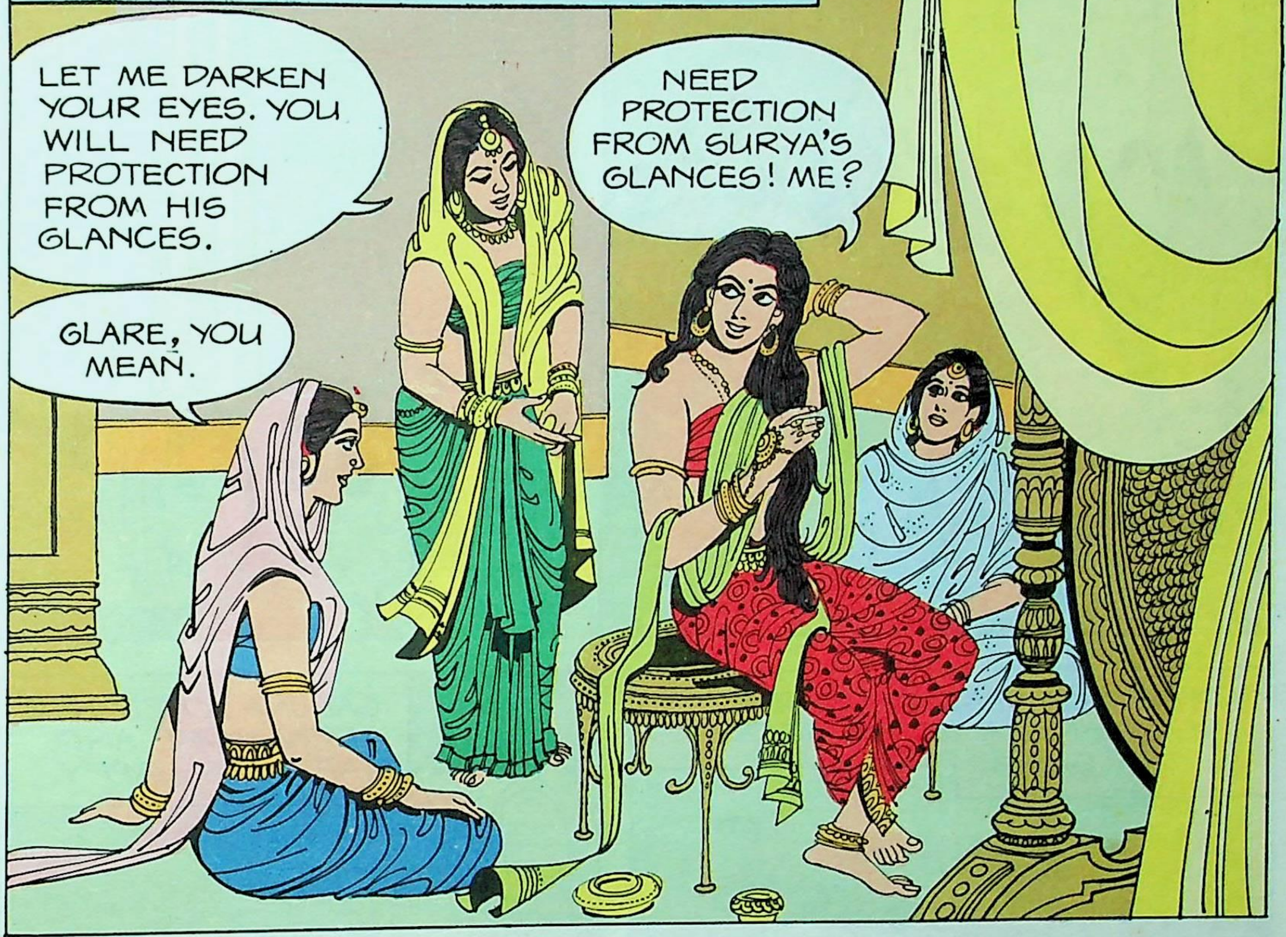

VISHWAKARMA APPROACHED SURYA WITH HIS DAUGHTER.

I SHALL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO WED YOUR FAIR DAUGHTER.

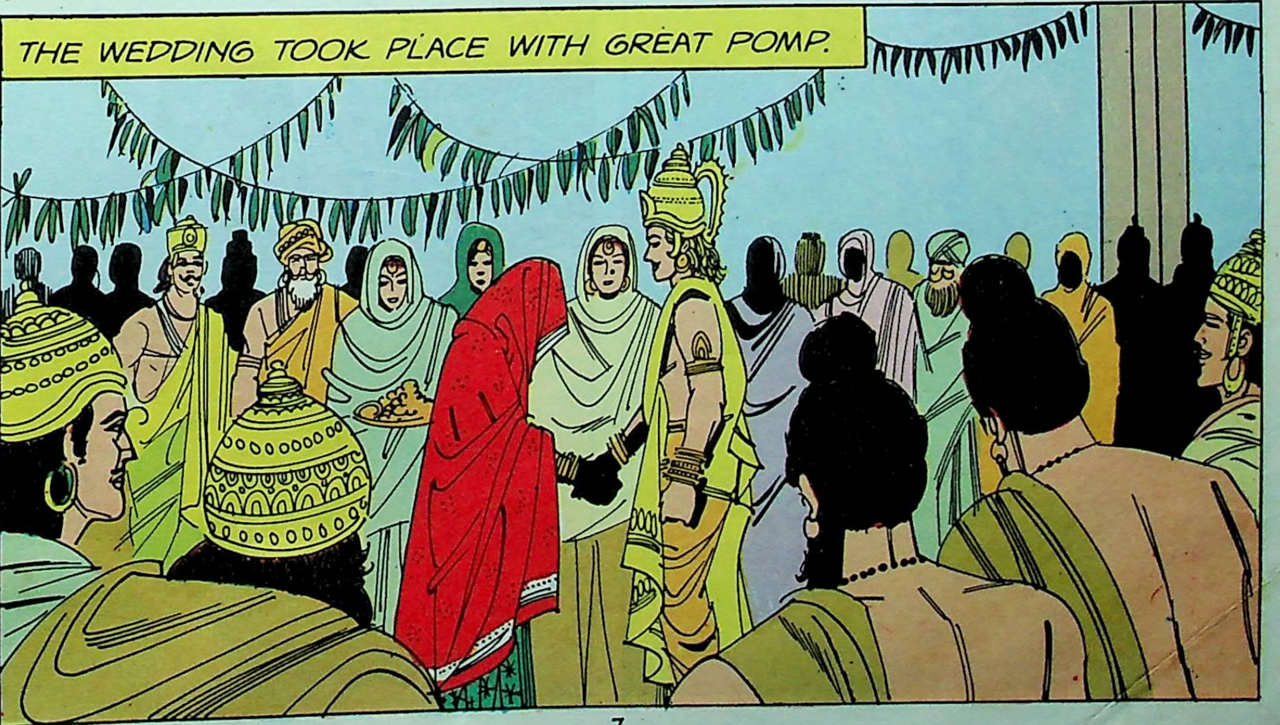

BUT WHAT DOES SANJNA SAY?
MY FATHER HAS SPOKEN MY WILL.

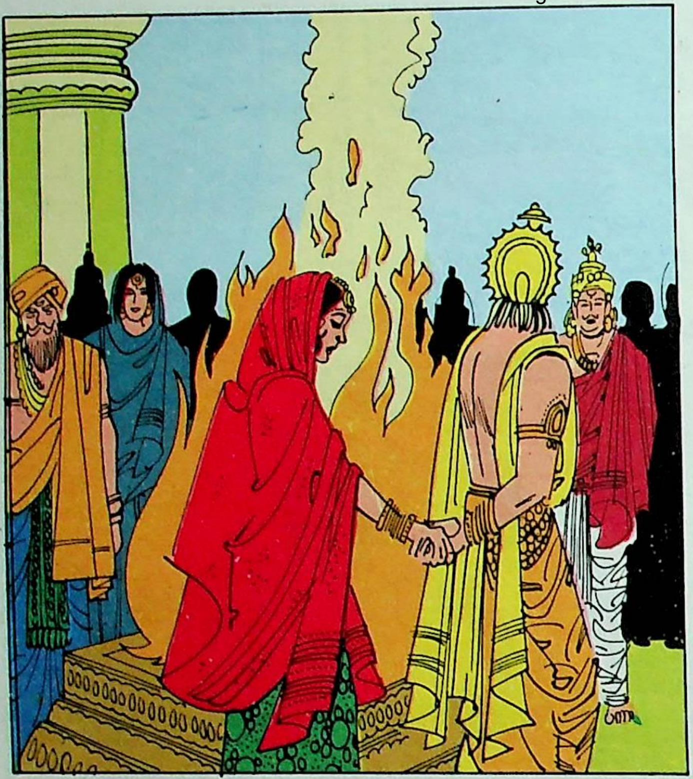

VISHWAKARMA DREW SANJUNA ASIDE.
THINK WELL. ARE YOU SURE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BEAR HIS BRILLIANCE IN ALL SEASONS?
I AM SURE, FATHER.
WHERE IS MOTHER?
SHE AWAITS YOU.
I SEEK YOUR BLESSINGS, MOTHER.
MAY YOU EVER BE HAPPY.

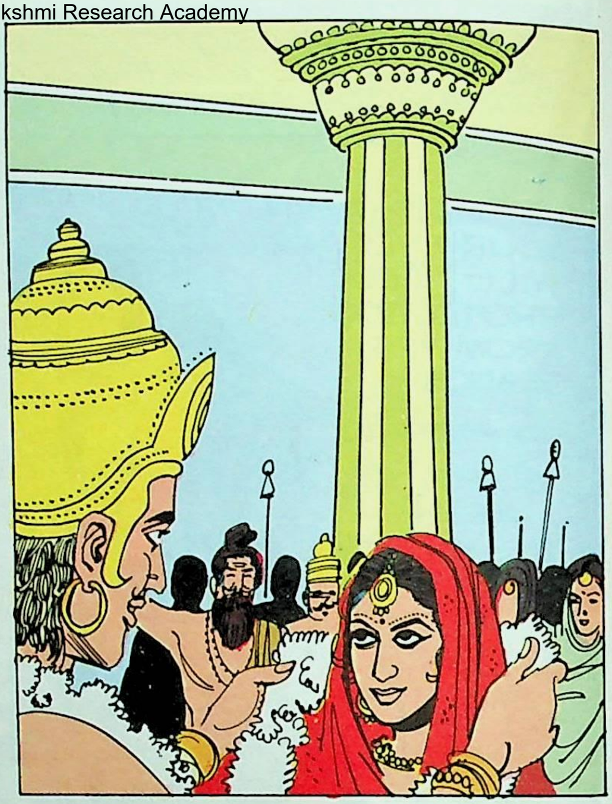
THE DAY OF THE WEDDING SOON DAWNED. AS THE BRIDE WAS BEING ADORNED–

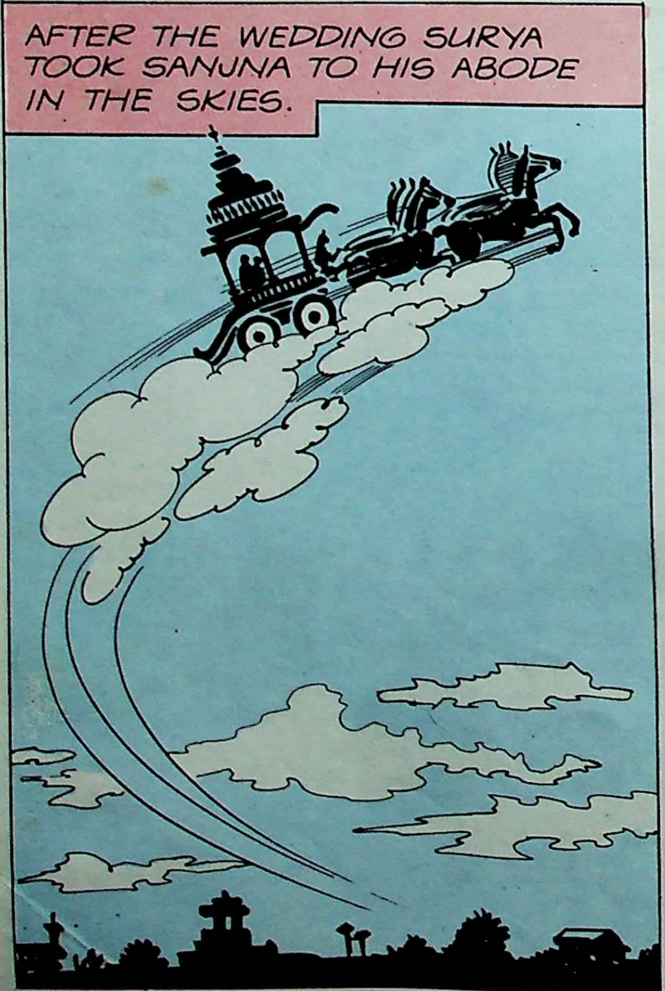

LET ME DARKEN YOUR EYES. YOU WILL NEED PROTECTION FROM HIS GLANCES.
NEED PROTECTION FROM SURYA'S GLANCES! ME?
GLARE, YOU MEAN.

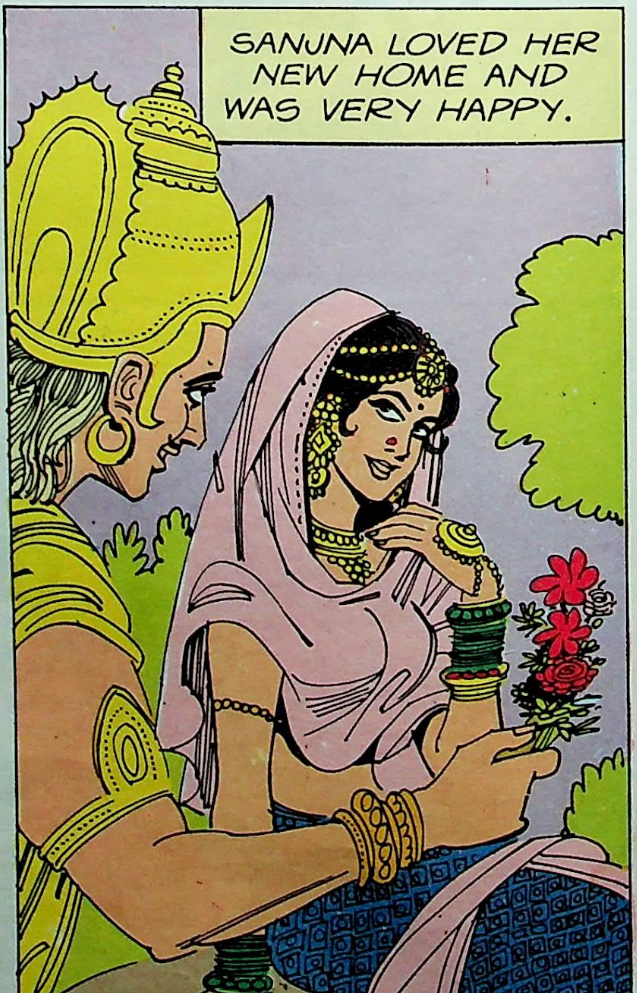
THE WEDDING TOOK PLACE WITH GREAT POMP.

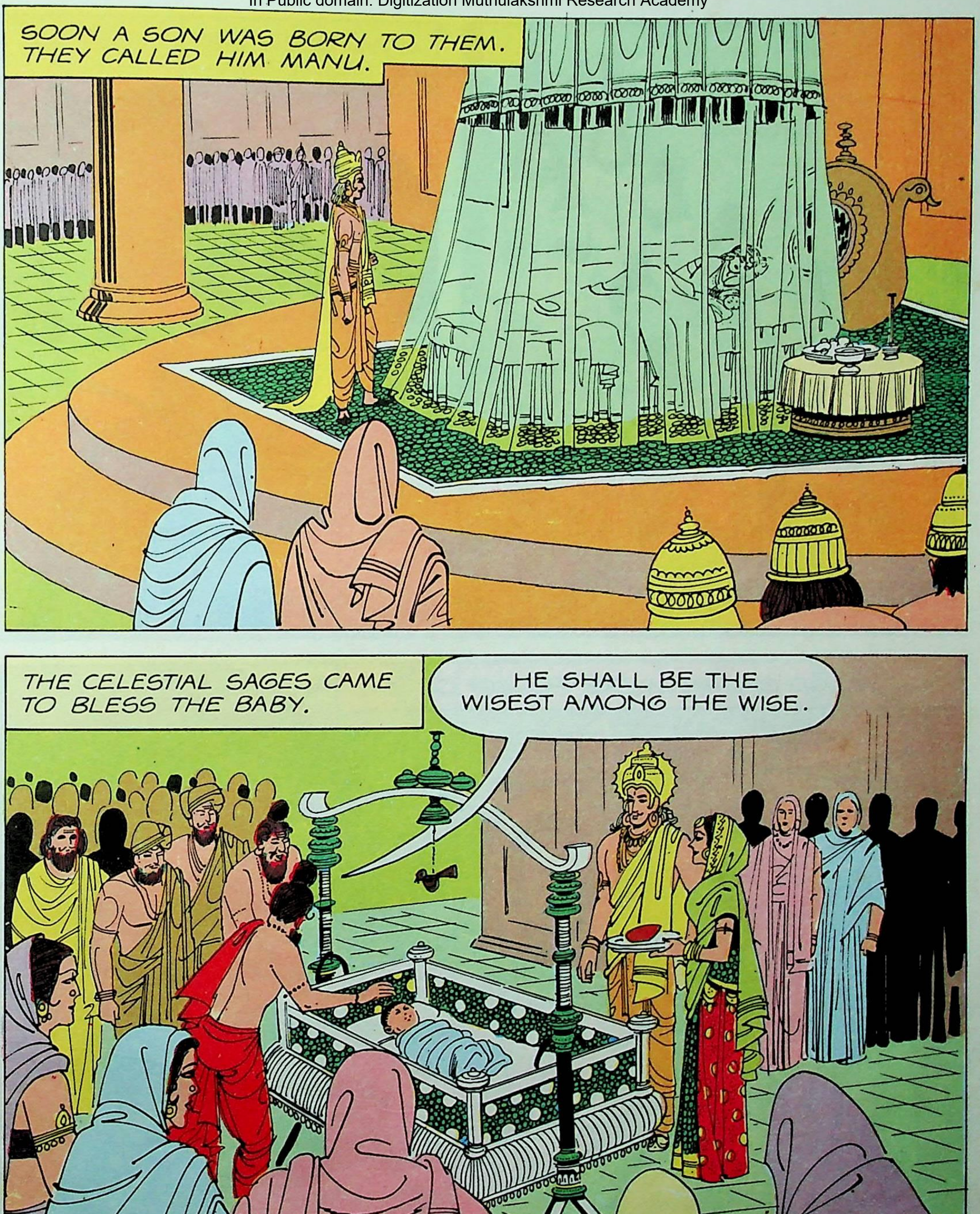


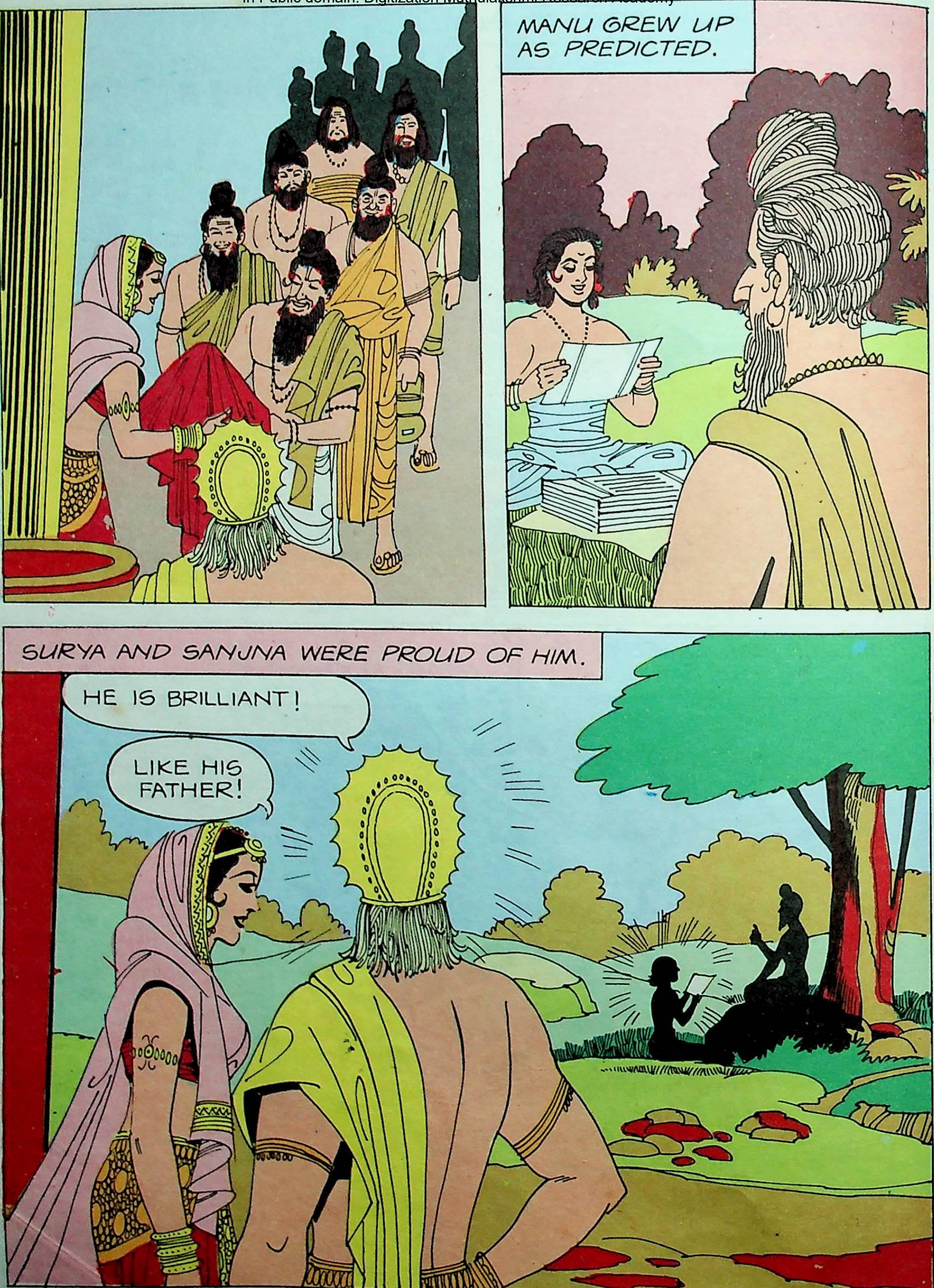


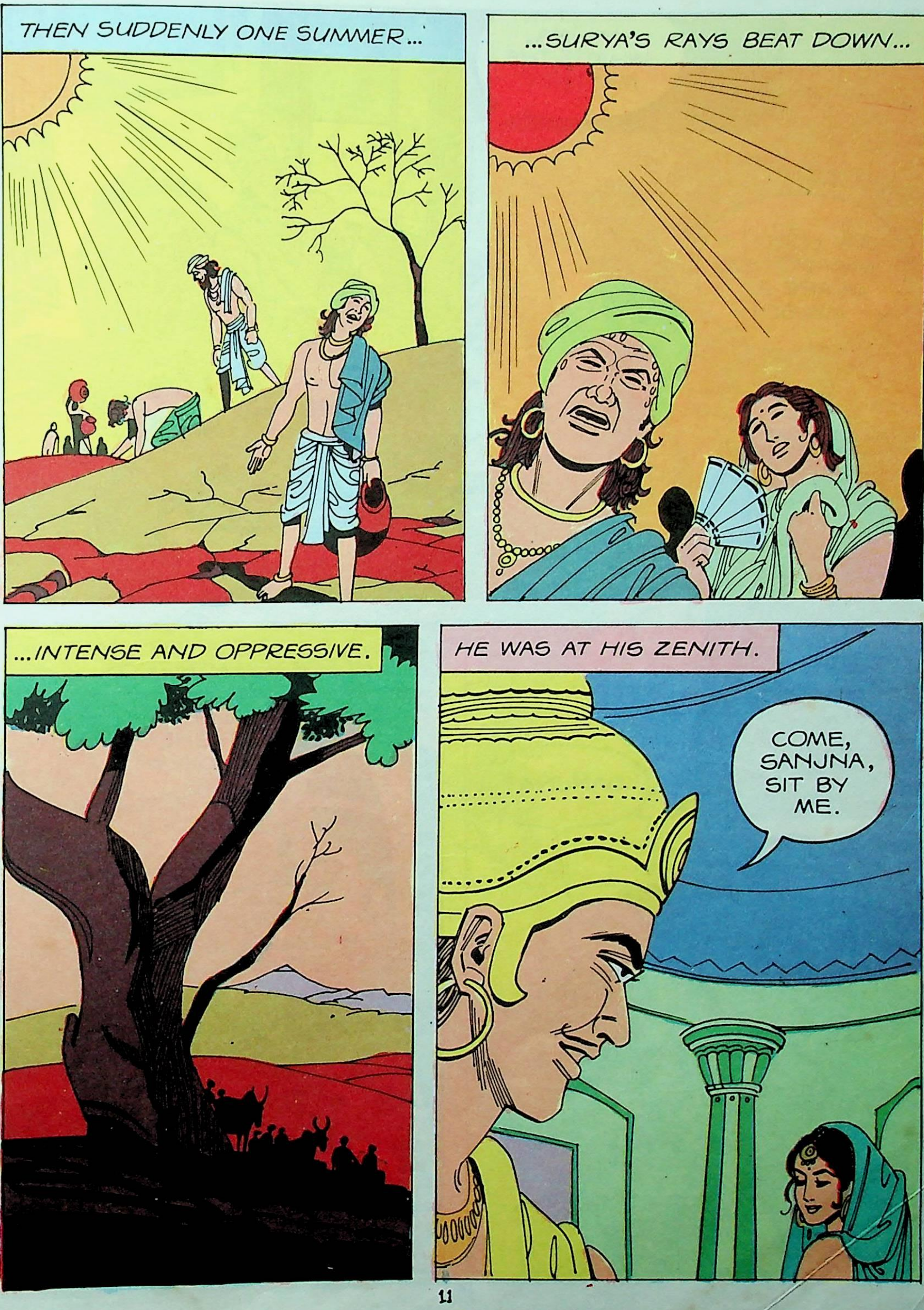


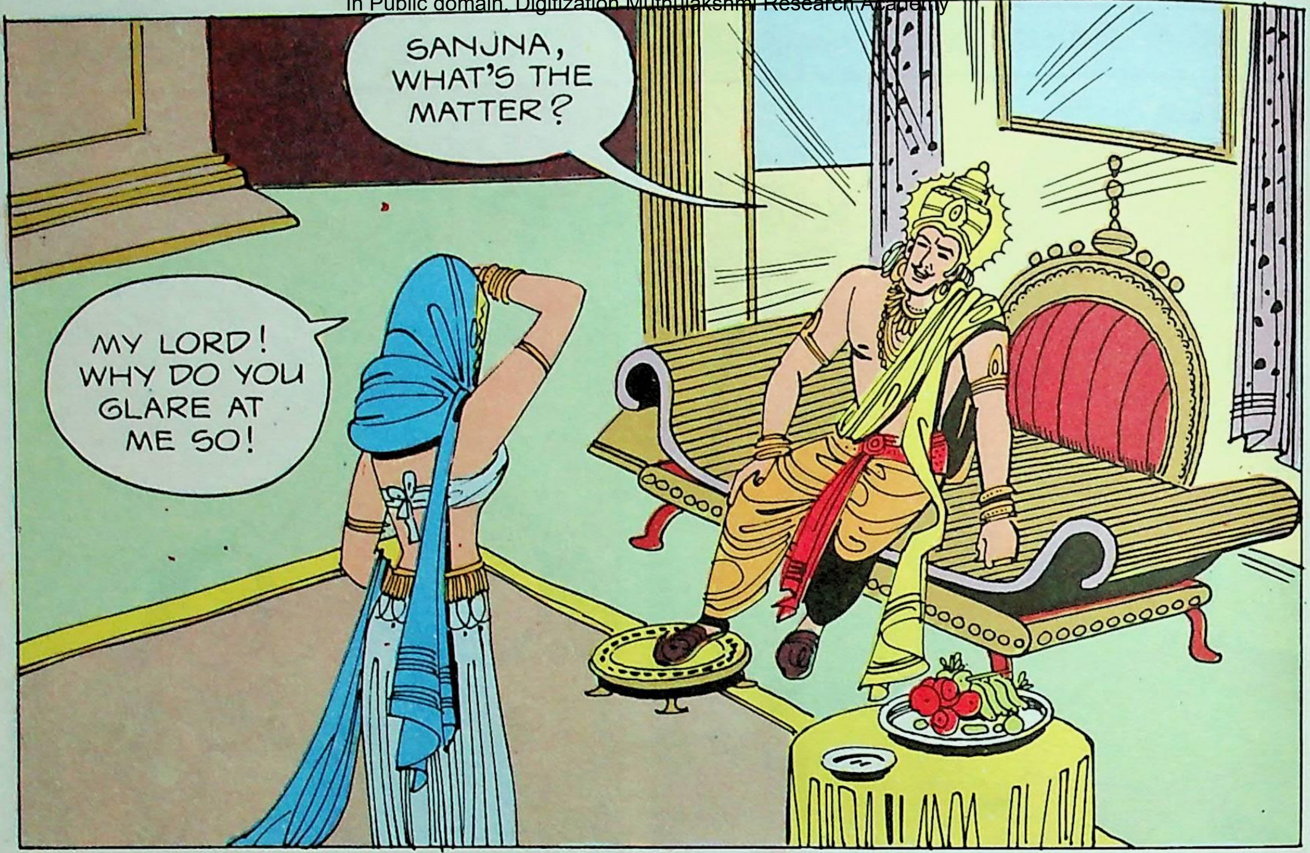

AFTER THE WEDDING SURYA TOOK SANJUNA TO HIS ABODE IN THE SKIES.

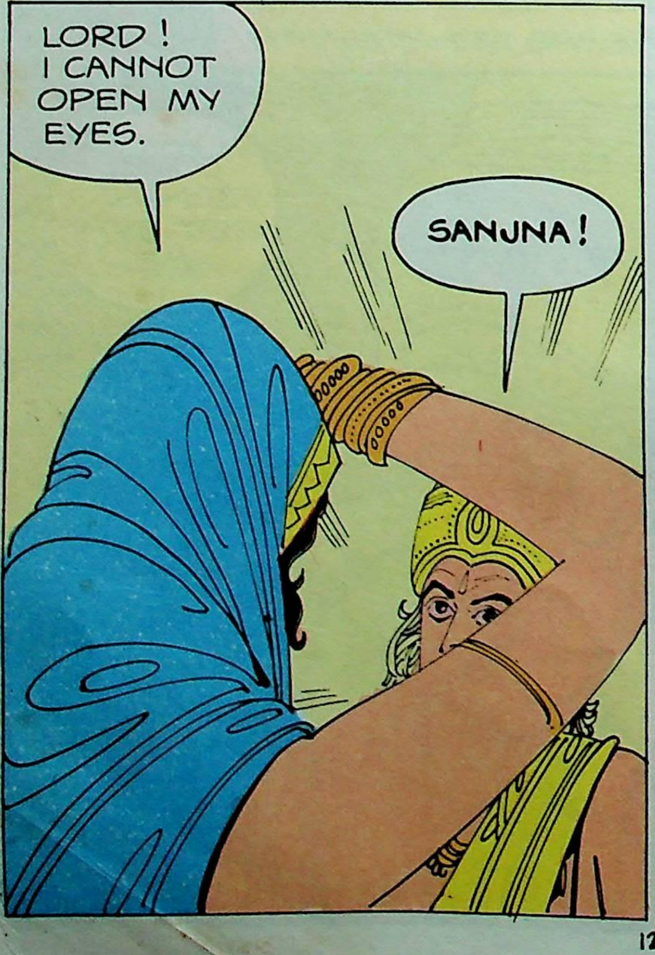

SANJUNA LOVED HER NEW HOME AND WAS VERY HAPPY.

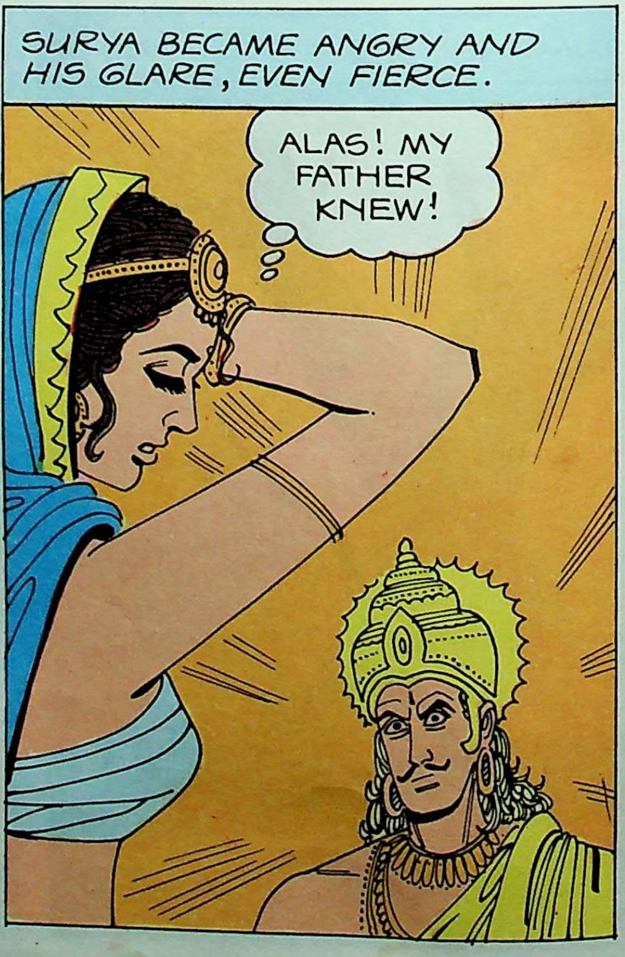

SOON A SON WAS BORN TO THEM. THEY CALLED HIM MANU.
THE CELESTIAL SAGES CAME TO BLESS THE BABY.
HE SHALL BE THE WISEST AMONG THE WISE.

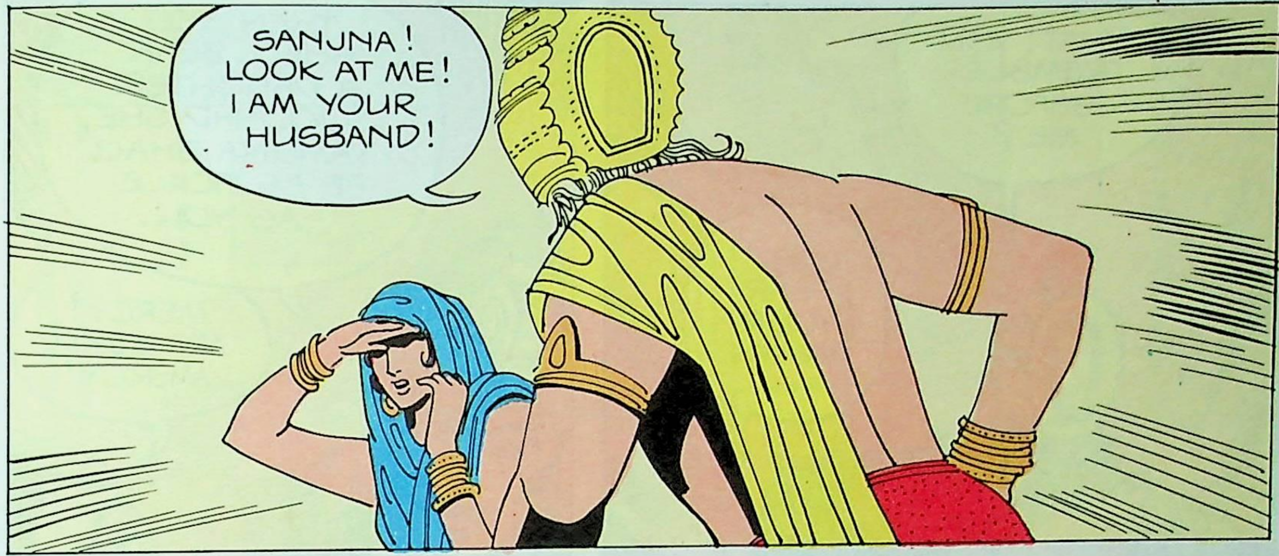

MANU GREW UP AS PREDICTED.
SURYA AND SANJNA WERE PROUD OF HIM.
HE IS BRILLIANT!
LIKE HIS FATHER!

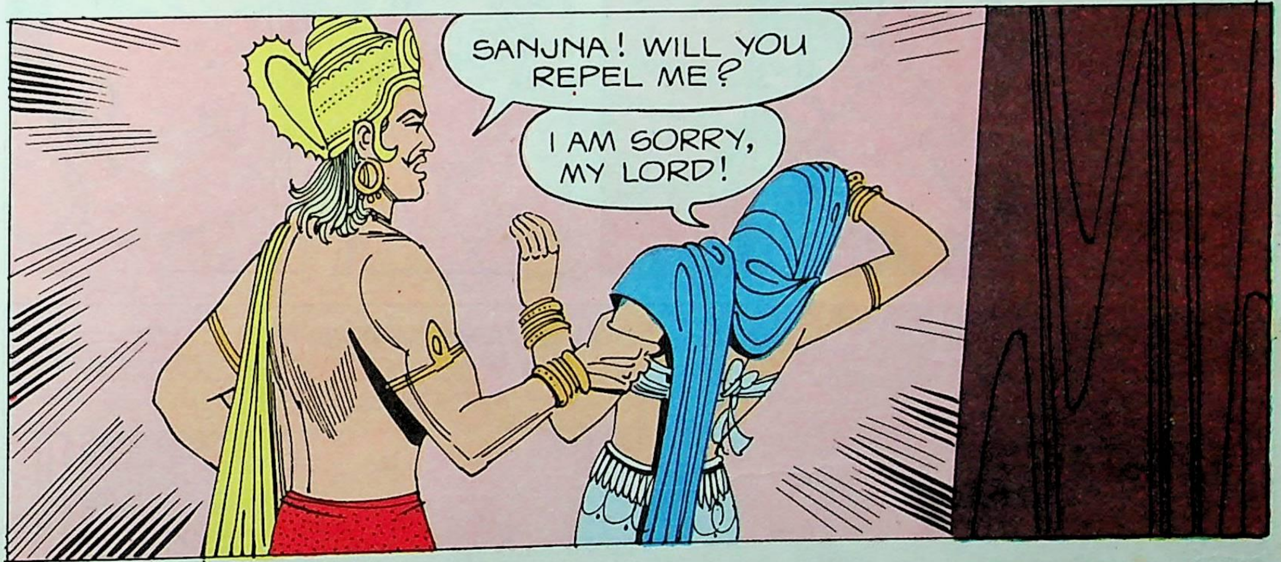

THEN SUDDENLY ONE SUMMER...
...SURYA'S RAYS BEAT DOWN...
...INTENSE AND OPPRESSIVE.
HE WAS AT HIS ZENITH.
COME, SANJNA, SIT BY ME.

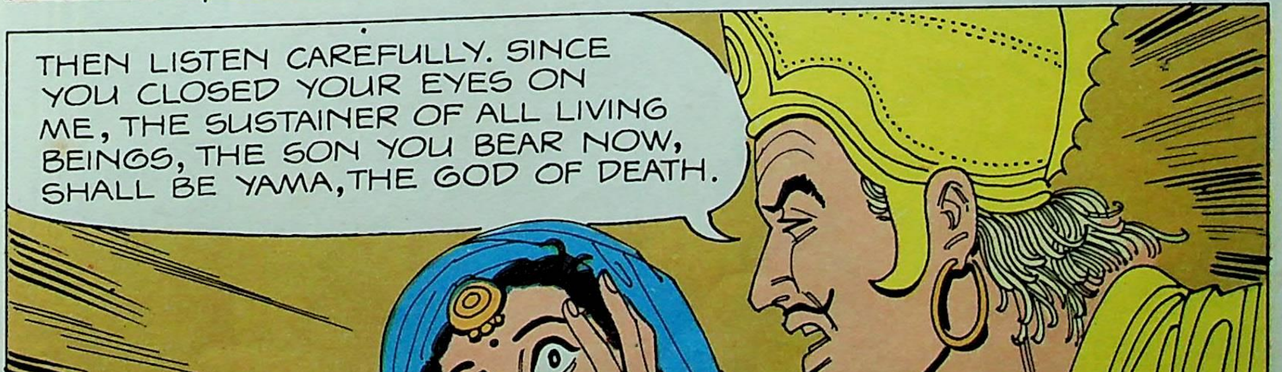

SANJUNA, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
MY LORD! WHY DO YOU GLARE AT ME SO!

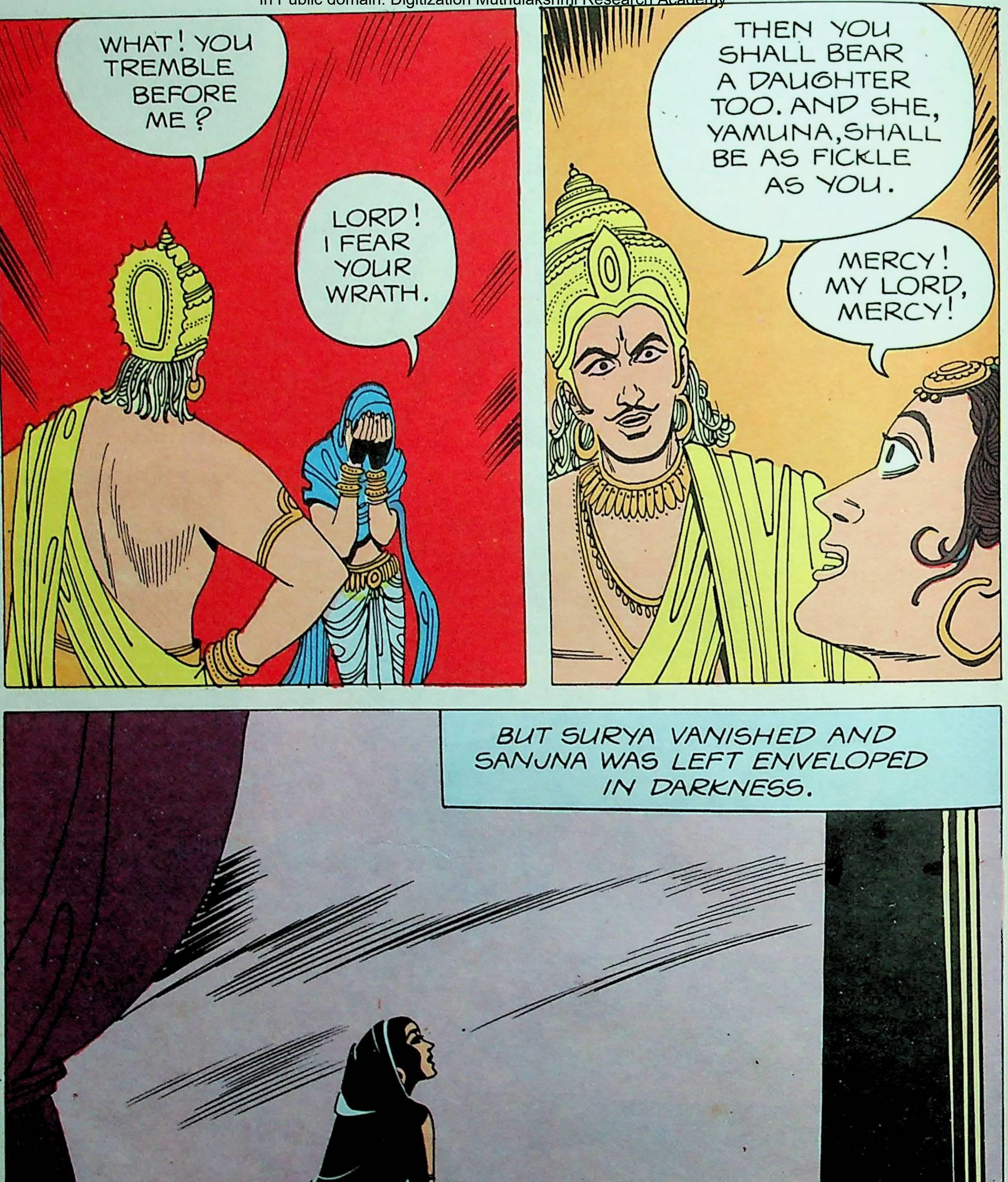

LORD! I CANNOT OPEN MY EYES.
SANJUNA!

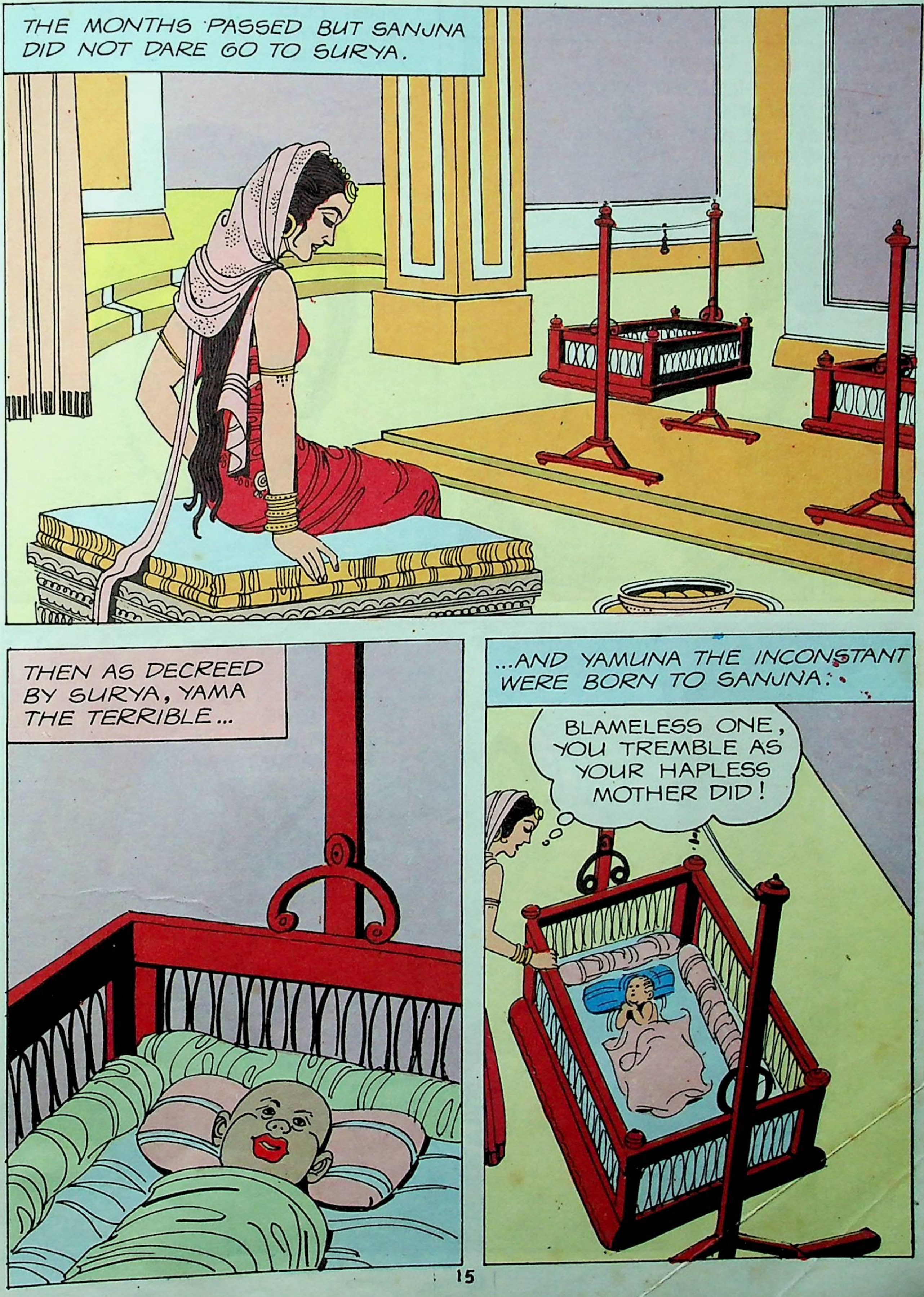

SURYA BECAME ANGRY AND HIS GLARE, EVEN FIERCE.
ALAS! MY FATHER KNEW!

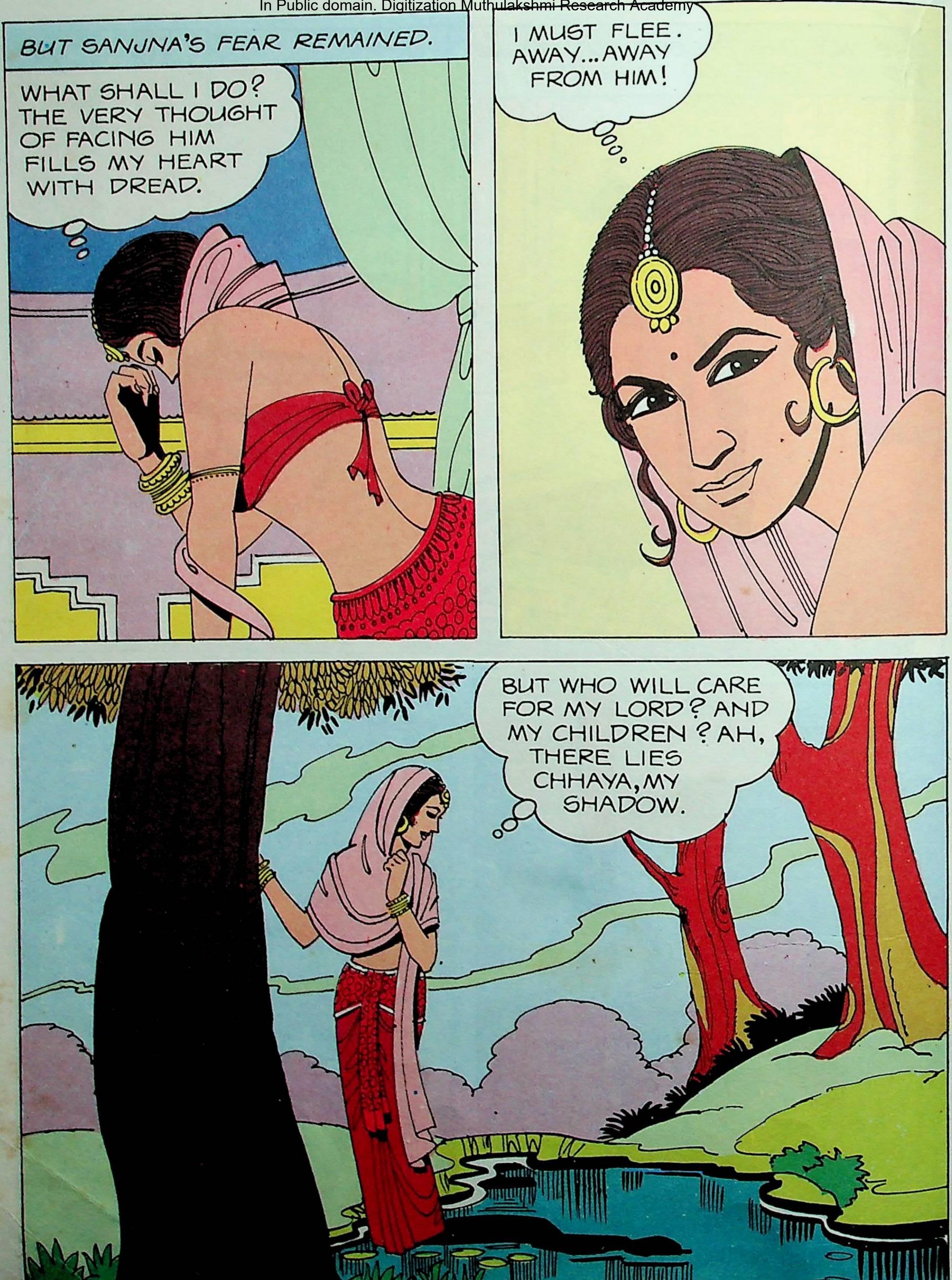

SANJNA! LOOK AT ME! I AM YOUR HUSBAND!

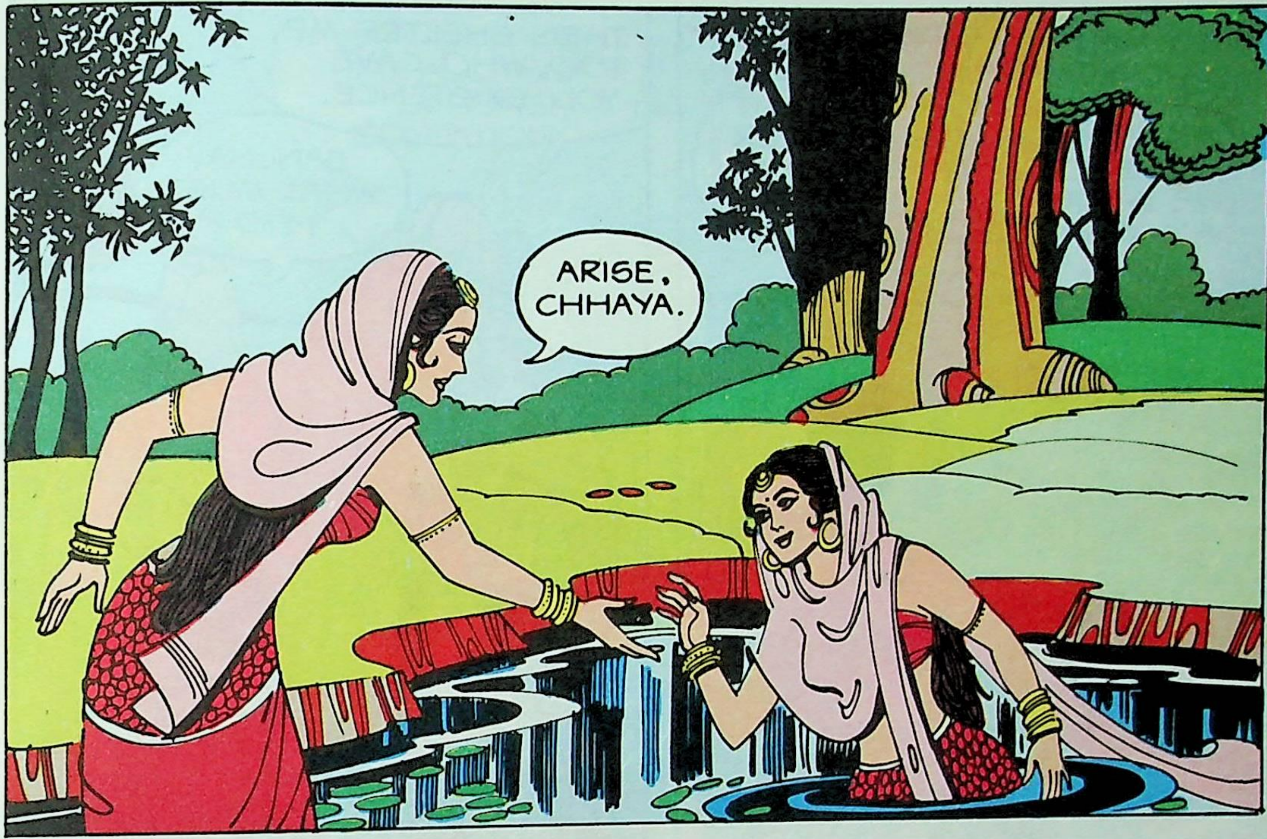

SANJNA! WILL YOU REPEL ME?
I AM SORRY, MY LORD!

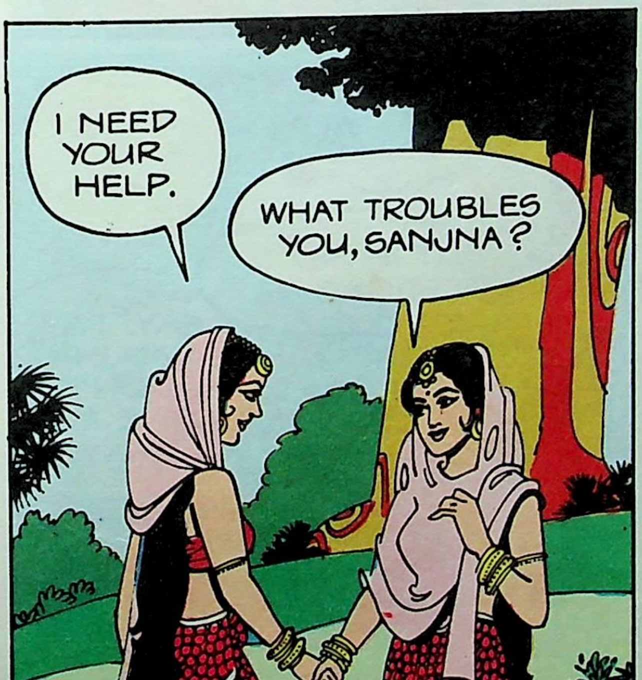

THEN LISTEN CAREFULLY. SINCE YOU CLOSED YOUR EYES ON ME, THE SUSTAINER OF ALL LIVING BEINGS, THE SON YOU BEAR NOW, SHALL BE YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH.

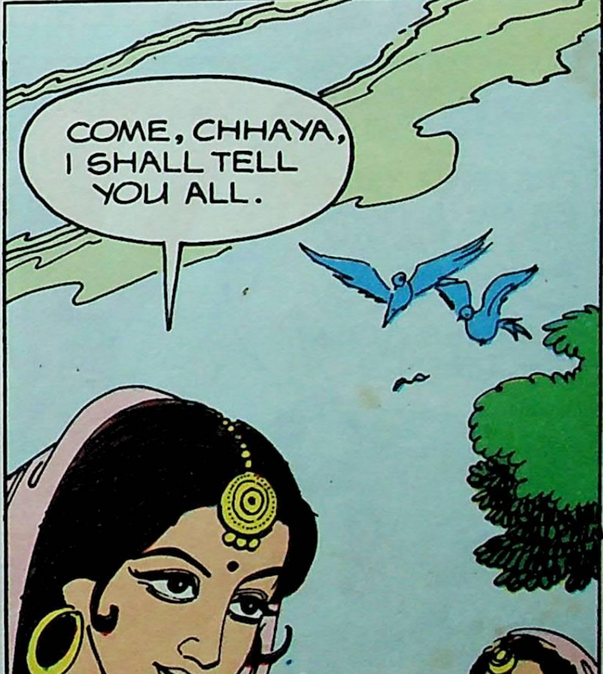

WHAT! YOU TREMBLE BEFORE ME?
LORD! I FEAR YOUR WRATH.
THEN YOU SHALL BEAR A DAUGHTER TOO. AND SHE, YAMUNA, SHALL BE AS FICKLE AS YOU.
MERCY! MY LORD, MERCY!
BUT SURYA VANISHED AND SANJNA WAS LEFT ENVELOPED IN DARKNESS.

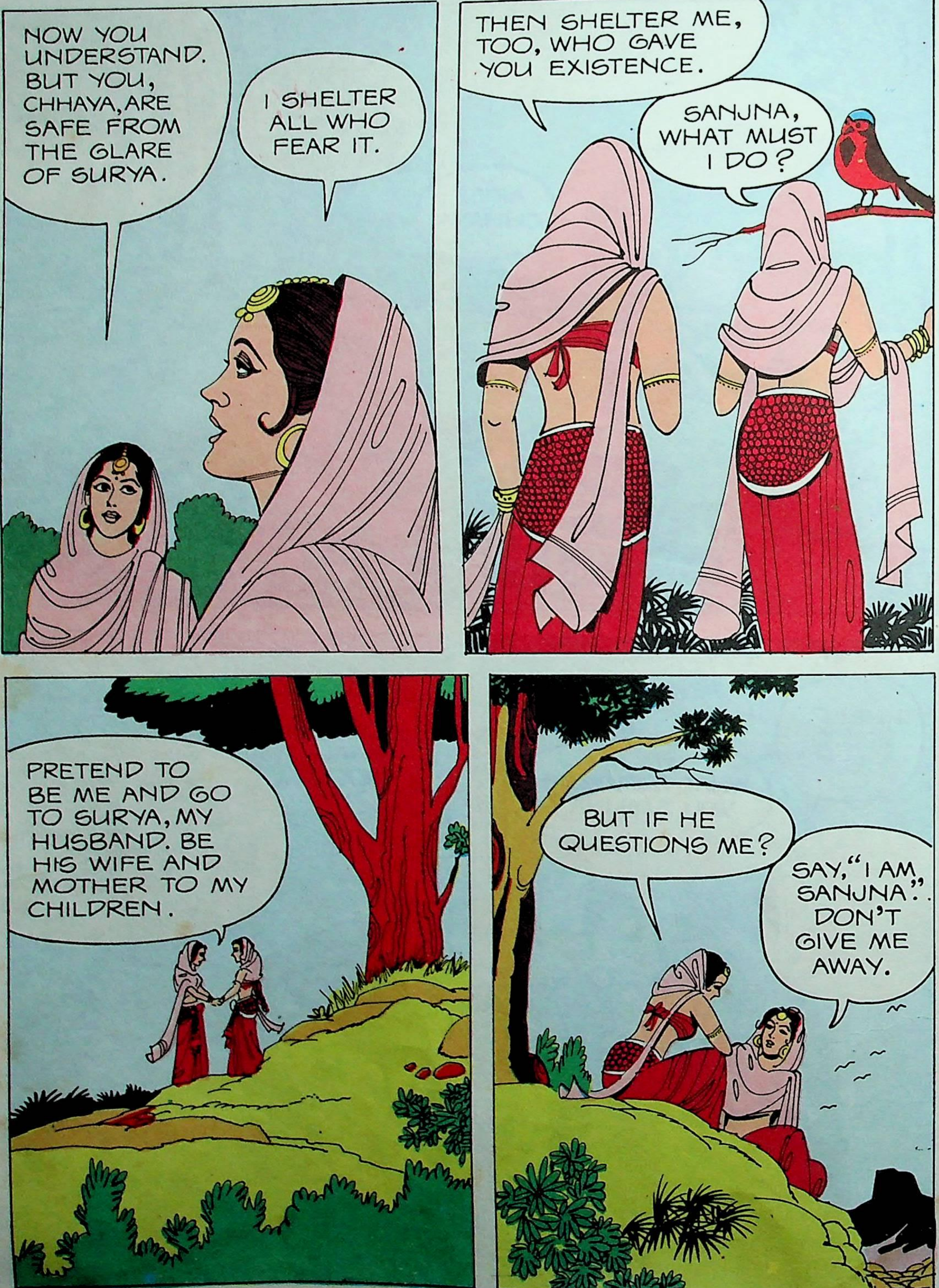

THE MONTHS PASSED BUT SANJUNA DID NOT DARE GO TO SURYA.
THEN AS DECREED BY SURYA, YAMA THE TERRIBLE...
...AND YAMUNA THE INCONSTANT WERE BORN TO SANUNA.
BLAMELESS ONE, YOU TREMBLE AS YOUR HAPLESS MOTHER DID!

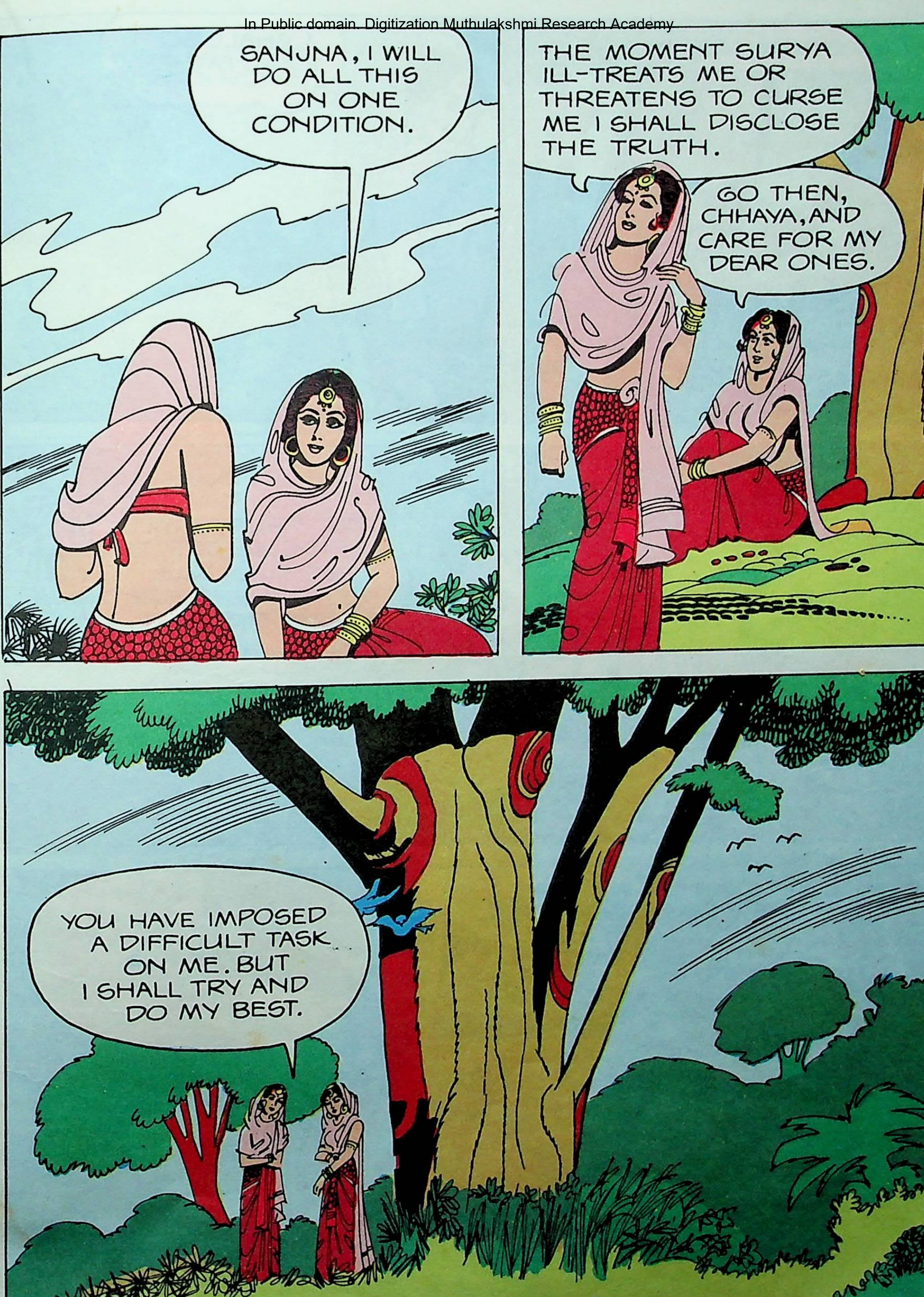

BUT SANJNA'S FEAR REMAINED.
WHAT SHALL I DO? THE VERY THOUGHT OF FACING HIM FILLS MY HEART WITH DREAD.
I MUST FLEE. AWAY...AWAY FROM HIM!
BUT WHO WILL CARE FOR MY LORD? AND MY CHILDREN? AH, THERE LIES CHHAYA, MY SHADOW.

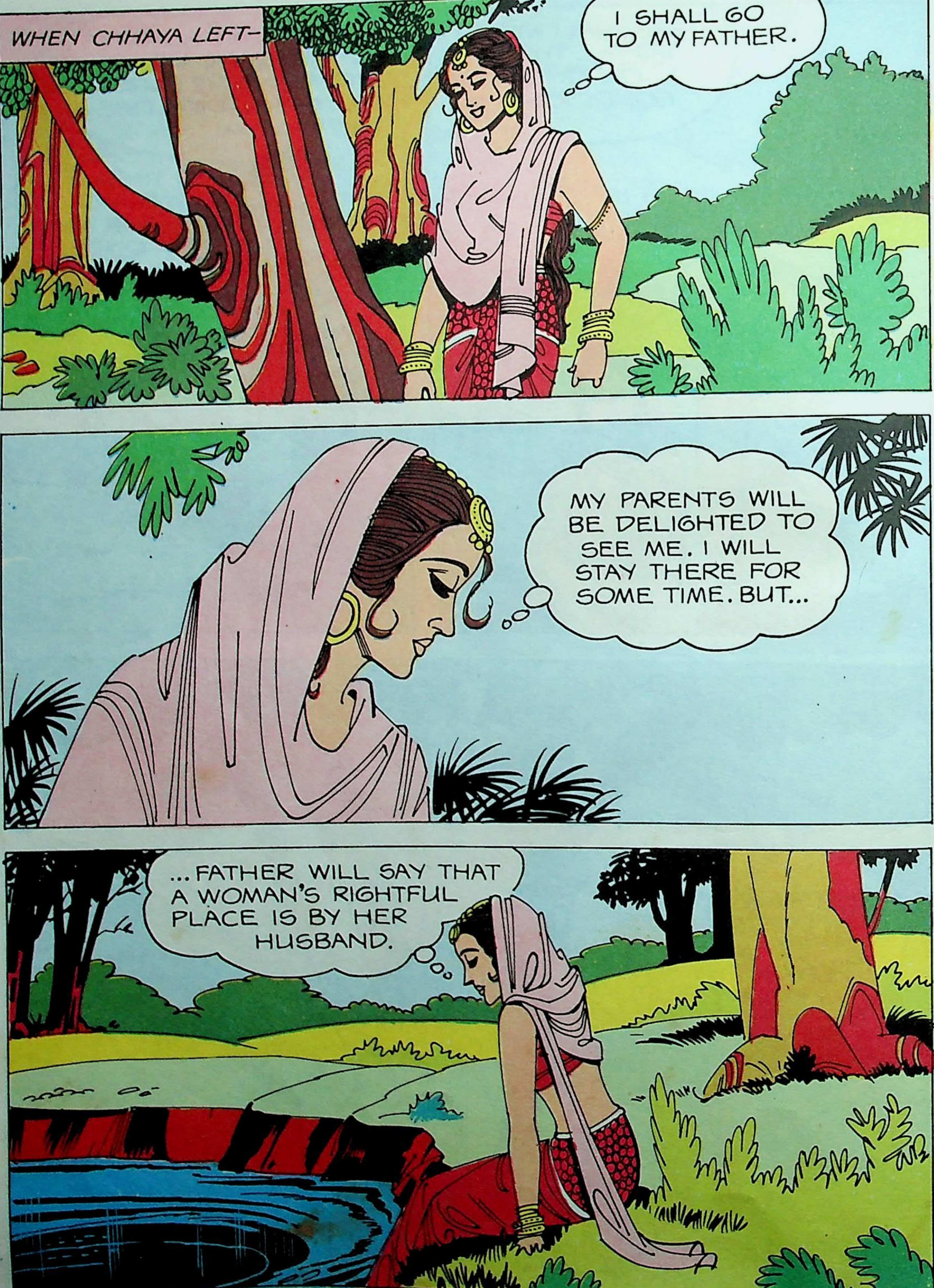

ARISE, CHHAYA.

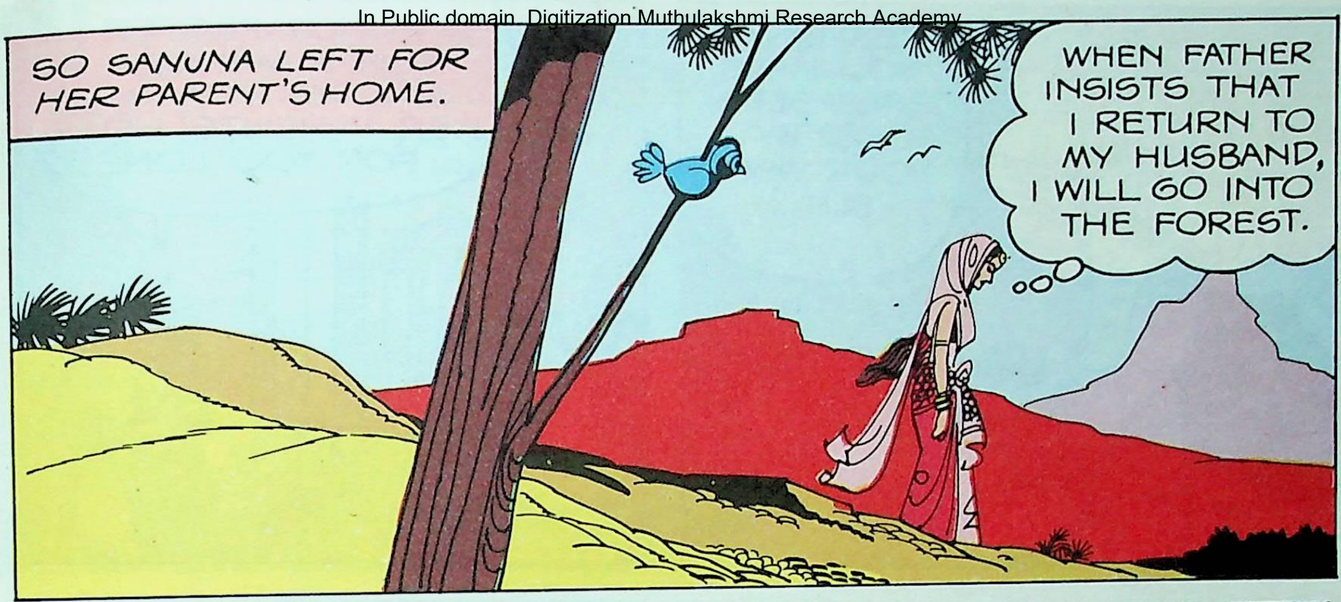

I NEED YOUR HELP.
WHAT TROUBLES YOU, SANJUNA?

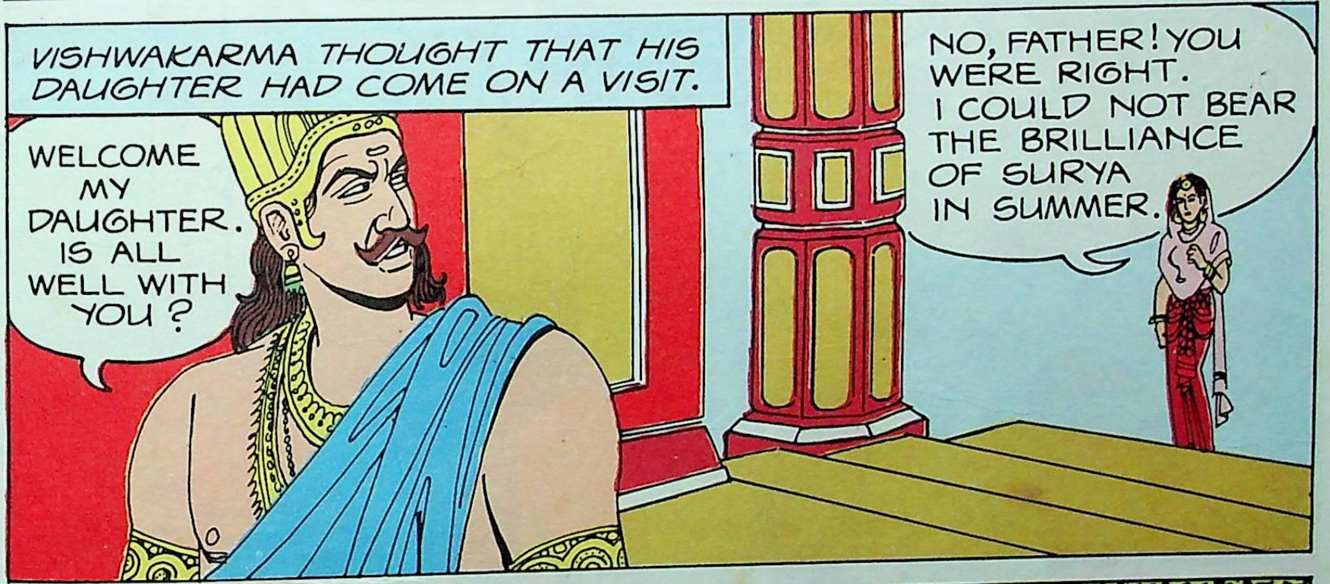

COME, CHHAYA, I SHALL TELL YOU ALL.

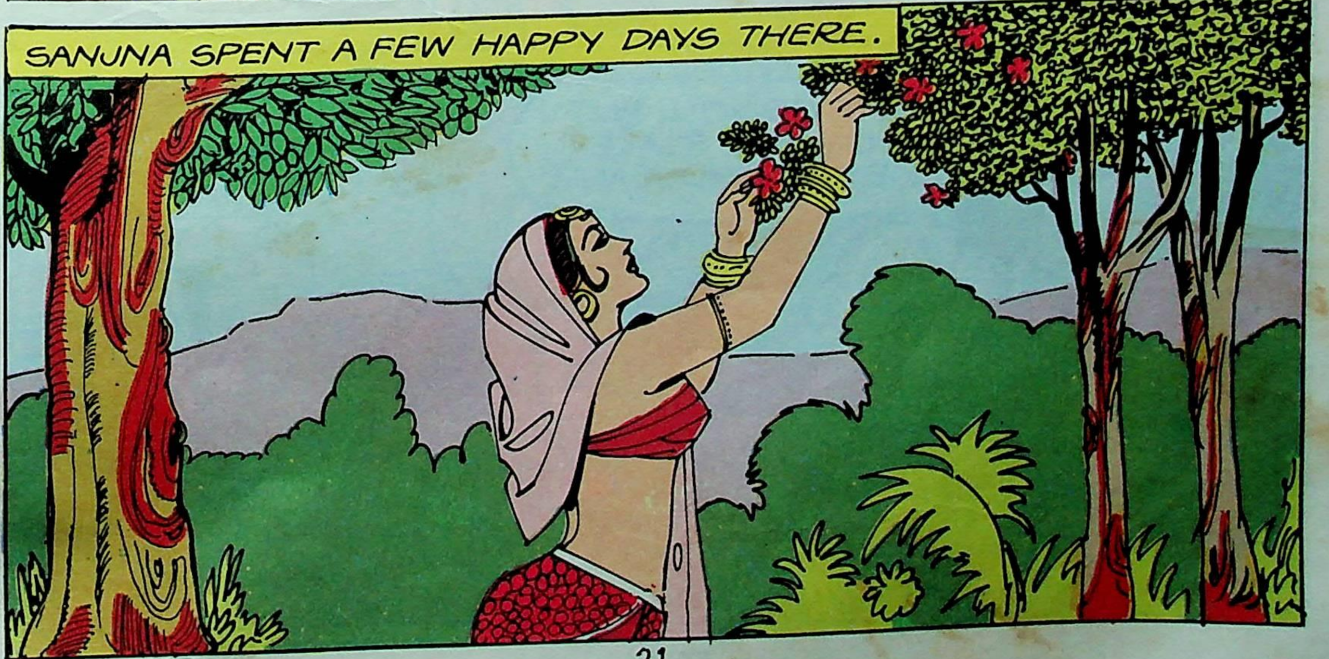

NOW YOU UNDERSTAND. BUT YOU, CHHAYA, ARE SAFE FROM THE GLARE OF SURYA.
I SHELTER ALL WHO FEAR IT.
THEN SHELTER ME, TOO, WHO GAVE YOU EXISTENCE.
SANJNA, WHAT MUST I DO?
PRETEND TO BE ME AND GO TO SURYA, MY HUSBAND. BE HIS WIFE AND MOTHER TO MY CHILDREN.
BUT IF HE QUESTIONS ME?
SAY, "I AM SANJNA". DON'T GIVE ME AWAY.

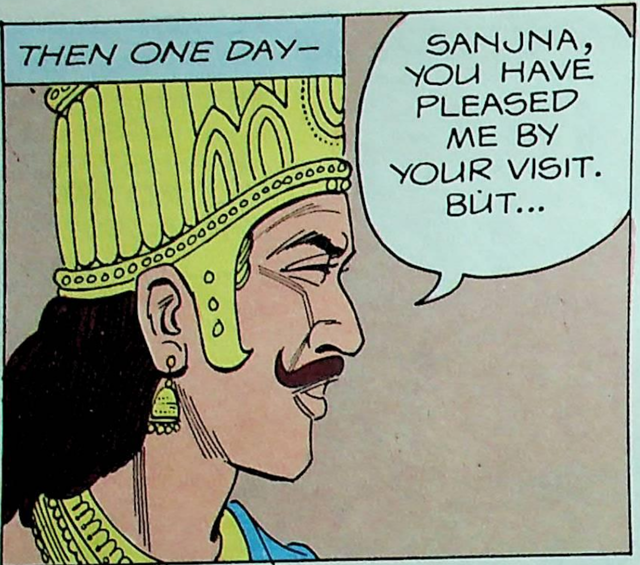

SANJNA, I WILL DO ALL THIS ON ONE CONDITION.
THE MOMENT SURYA ILL-TREATS ME OR THREATENS TO CURSE ME I SHALL DISCLOSE THE TRUTH.
GO THEN, CHHAYA, AND CARE FOR MY DEAR ONES.
YOU HAVE IMPOSED A DIFFICULT TASK ON ME. BUT I SHALL TRY AND DO MY BEST.

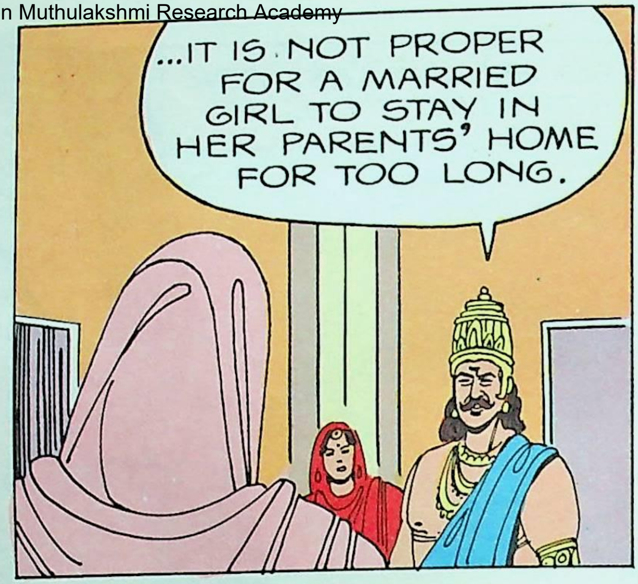

WHEN CHHAYA LEFT-
I SHALL GO TO MY FATHER.
MY PARENTS WILL BE DELIGHTED TO SEE ME. I WILL STAY THERE FOR SOME TIME. BUT...
...FATHER WILL SAY THAT A WOMAN'S RIGHTFUL PLACE IS BY HER HUSBAND.

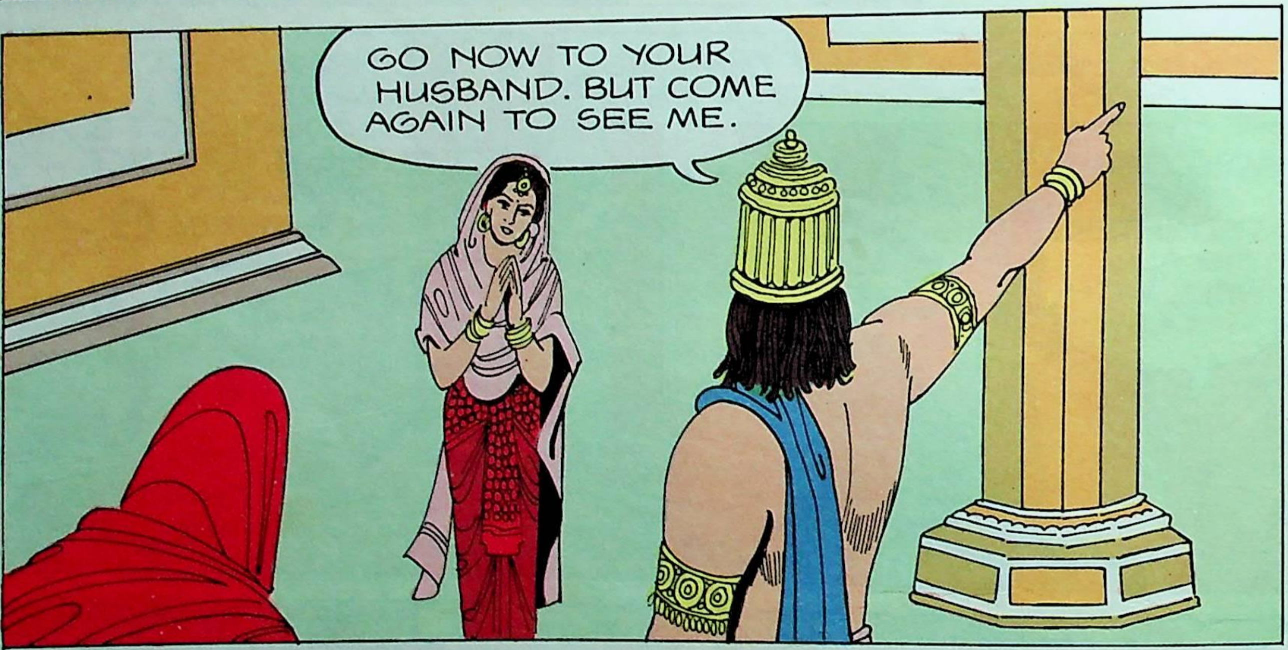

SO SANJNA LEFT FOR HER PARENT'S HOME.
WHEN FATHER INSISTS THAT I RETURN TO MY HUSBAND, I WILL GO INTO THE FOREST.

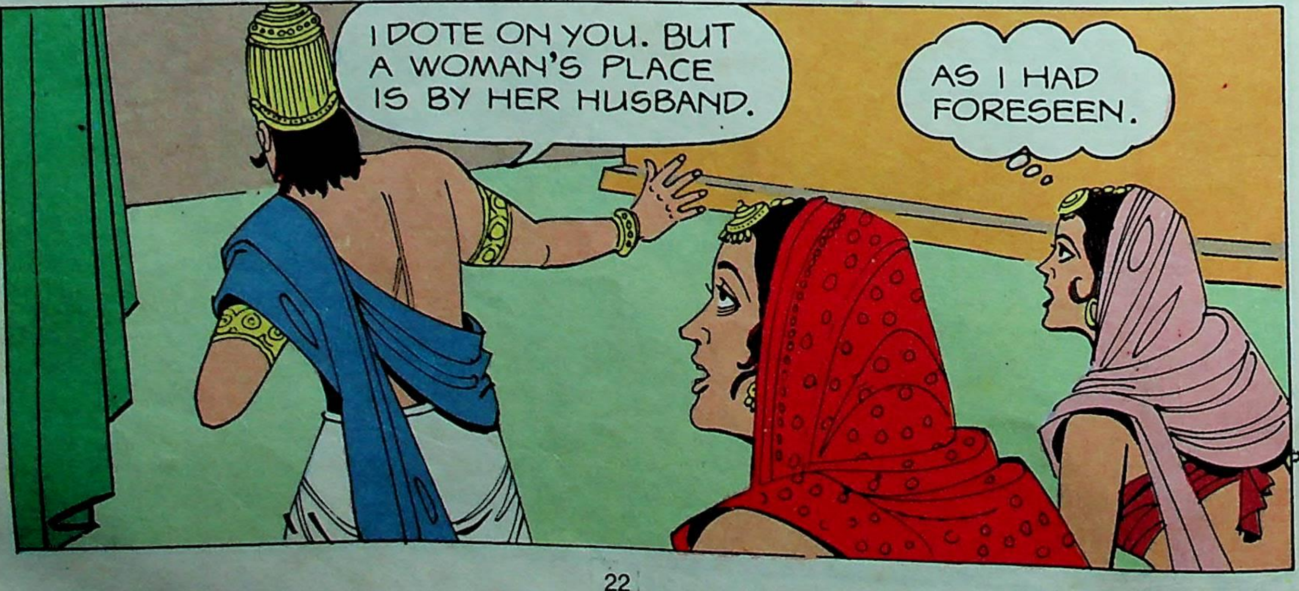

VISHWAKARMA THOUGHT THAT HIS DAUGHTER HAD COME ON A VISIT.
WELCOME MY DAUGHTER. IS ALL WELL WITH YOU?
NO, FATHER! YOU WERE RIGHT. I COULD NOT BEAR THE BRILLIANCE OF SURYA IN SUMMER.

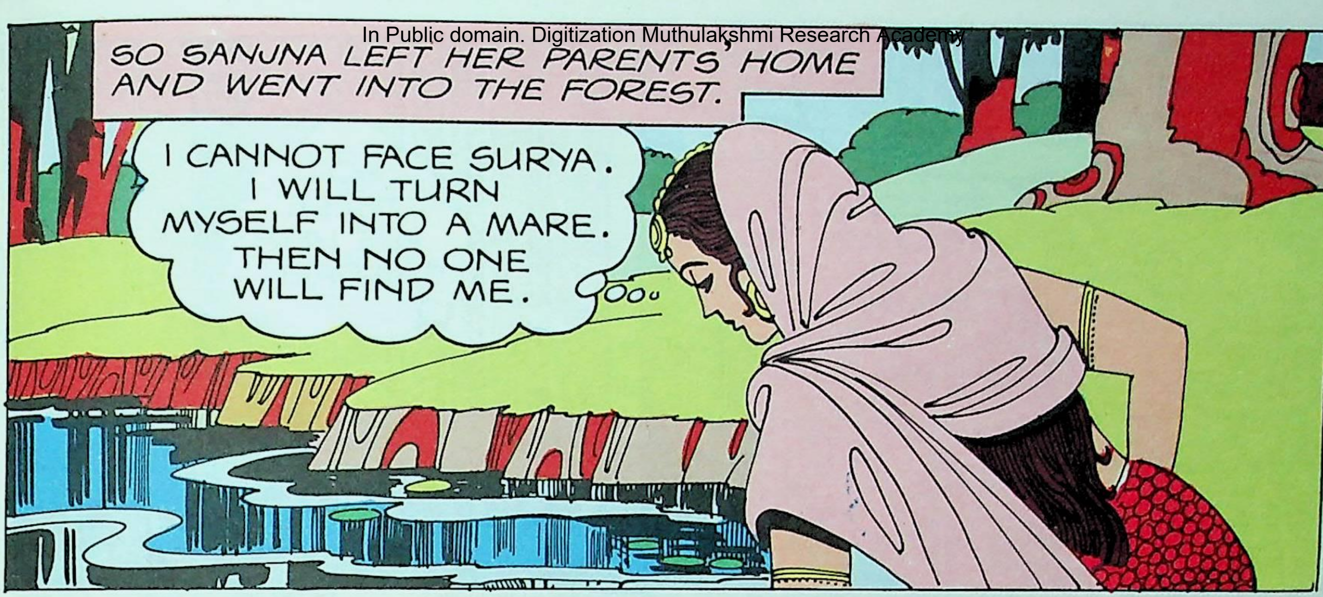

SANJNA SPENT A FEW HAPPY DAYS THERE.

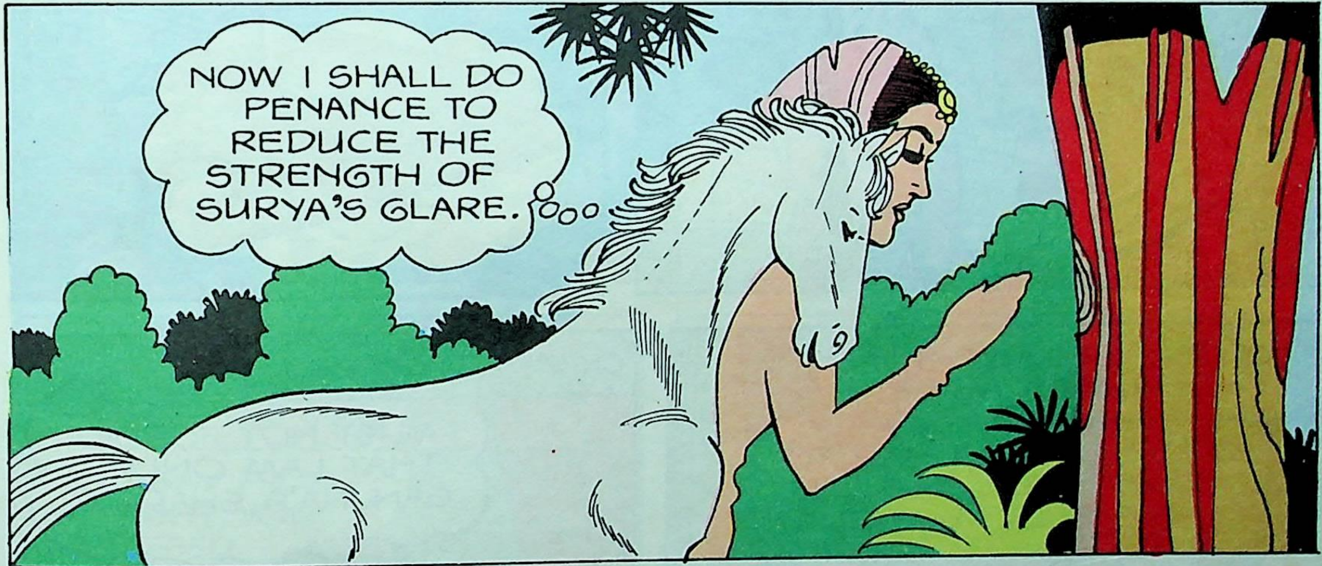

THEN ONE DAY—
SANJNA, YOU HAVE PLEASED ME BY YOUR VISIT. BUT...

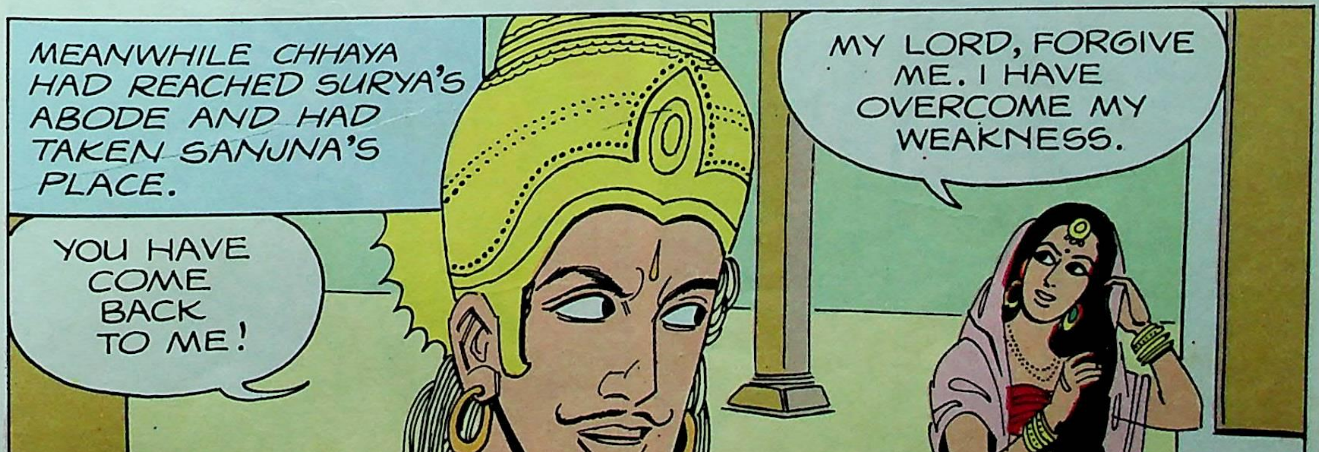

...IT IS NOT PROPER FOR A MARRIED GIRL TO STAY IN HER PARENTS' HOME FOR TOO LONG.

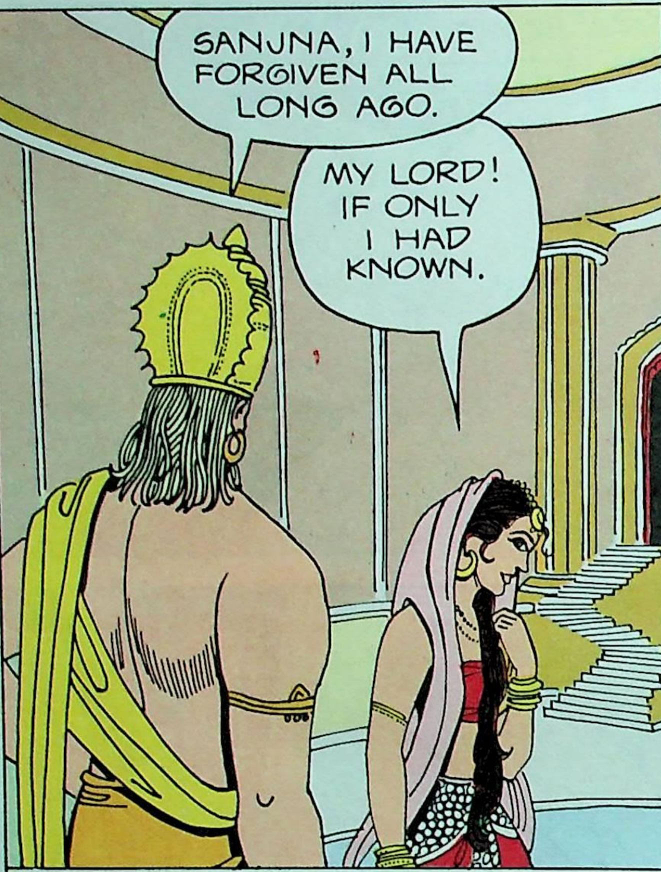

GO NOW TO YOUR HUSBAND. BUT COME AGAIN TO SEE ME.

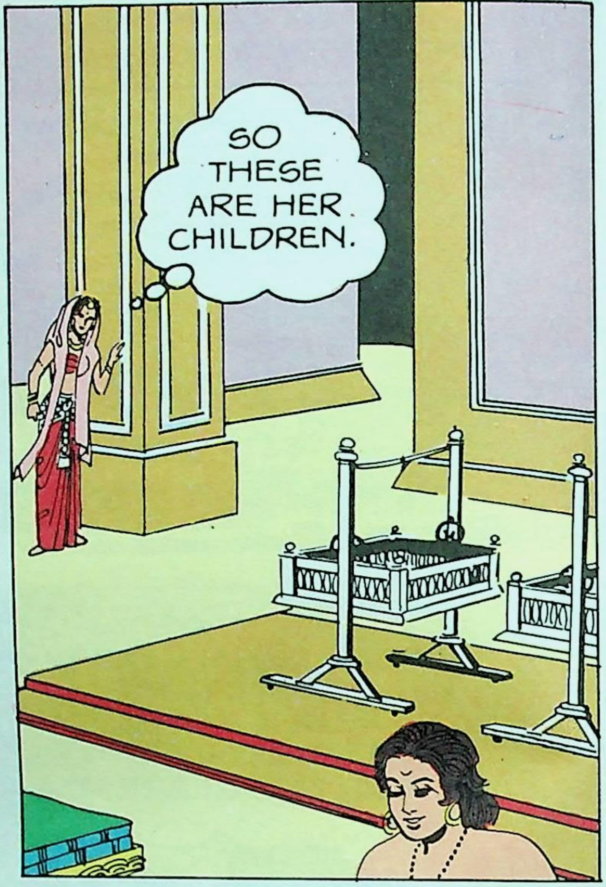

I DOTE ON YOU. BUT A WOMAN'S PLACE IS BY HER HUSBAND.
AS I HAD FORESEEN.

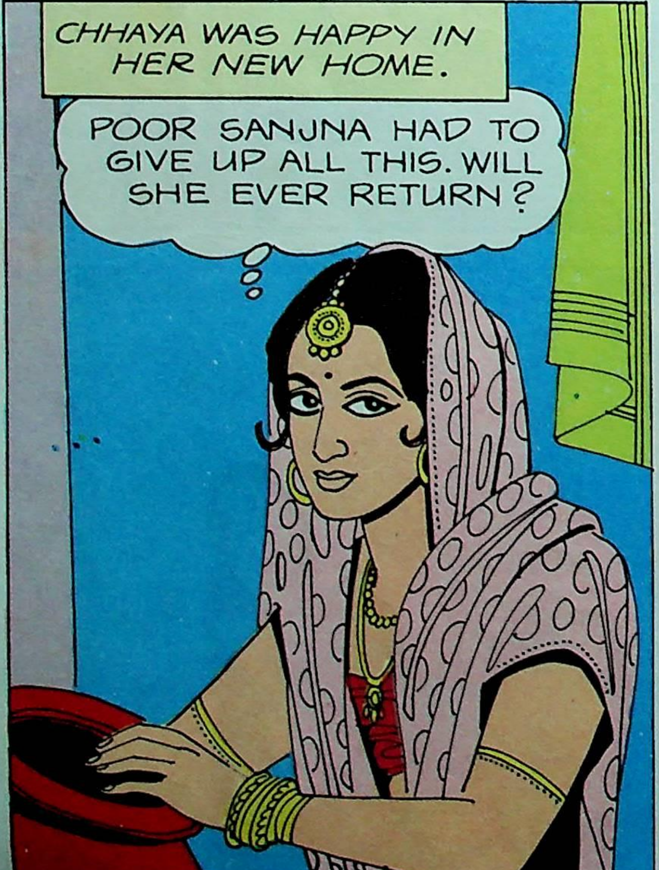

SO SANJUNA LEFT HER PARENTS' HOME AND WENT INTO THE FOREST.
I CANNOT FACE SURYA. I WILL TURN MYSELF INTO A MARE. THEN NO ONE WILL FIND ME.

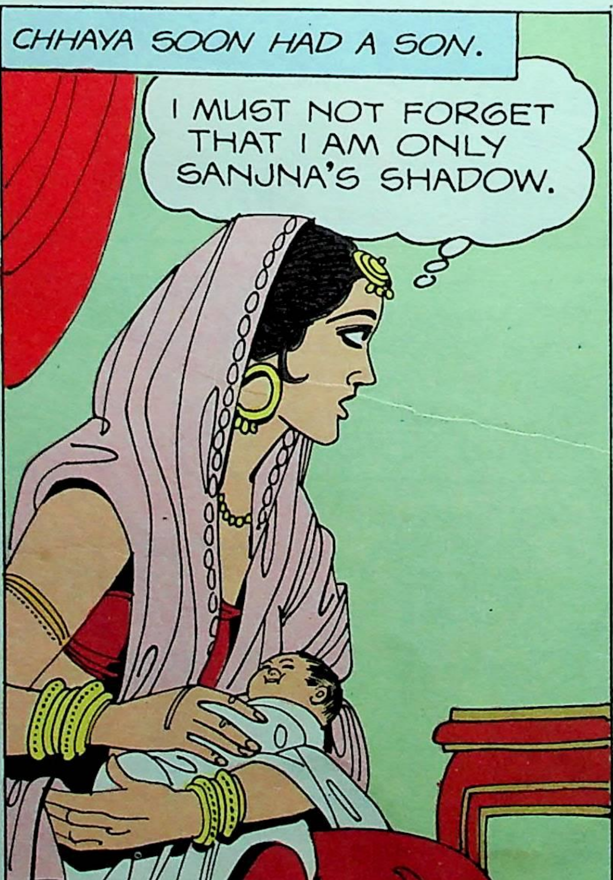

NOW I SHALL DO PENANCE TO REDUCE THE STRENGTH OF SURYA'S GLARE.

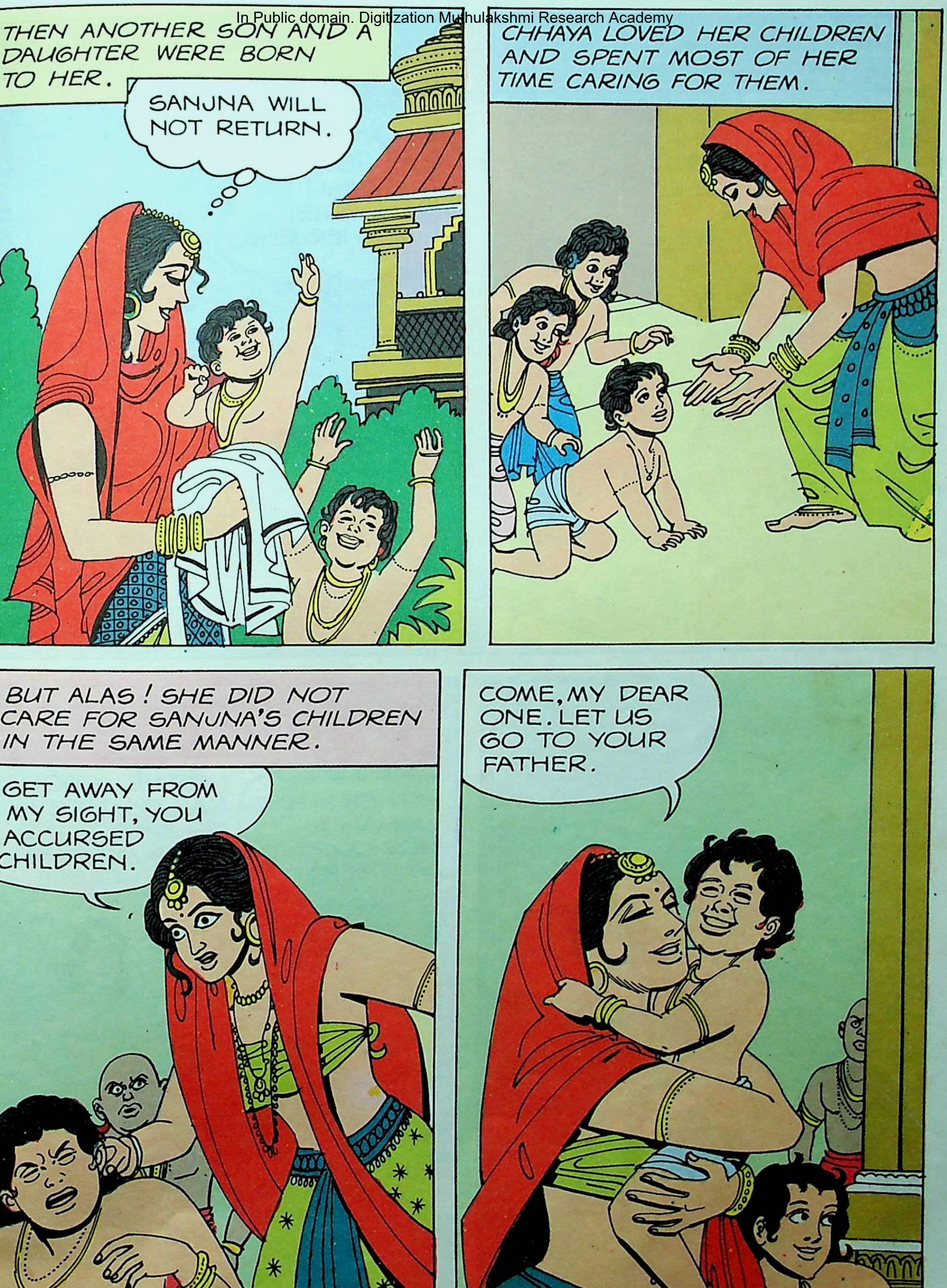

MEANWHILE CHHAYA HAD REACHED SURYA'S ABODE AND HAD TAKEN SANJUNA'S PLACE.
MY LORD, FORGIVE ME. I HAVE OVERCOME MY WEAKNESS.
YOU HAVE COME BACK TO ME!

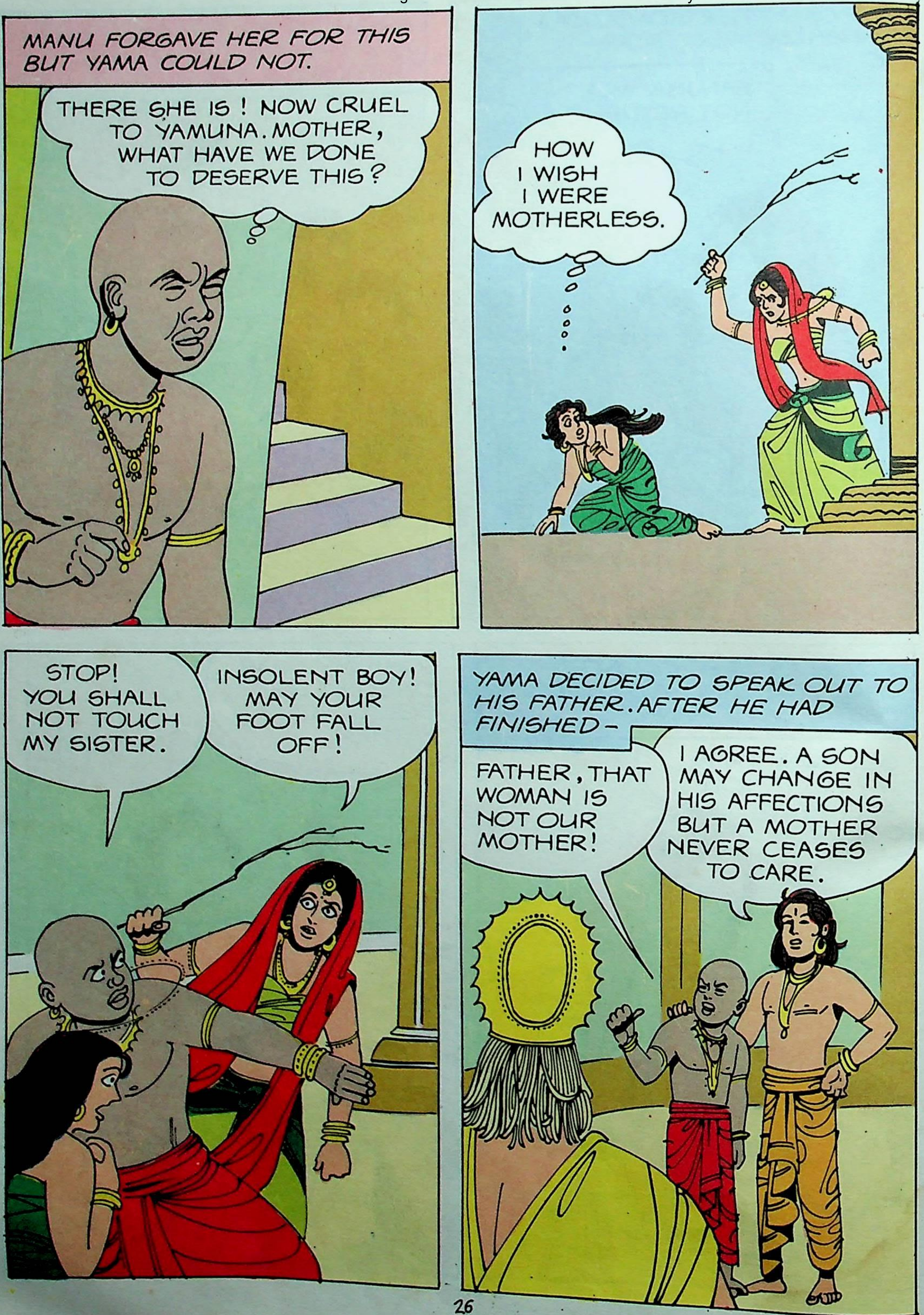

SANJNA, I HAVE FORGIVEN ALL LONG AGO.
MY LORD! IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN.

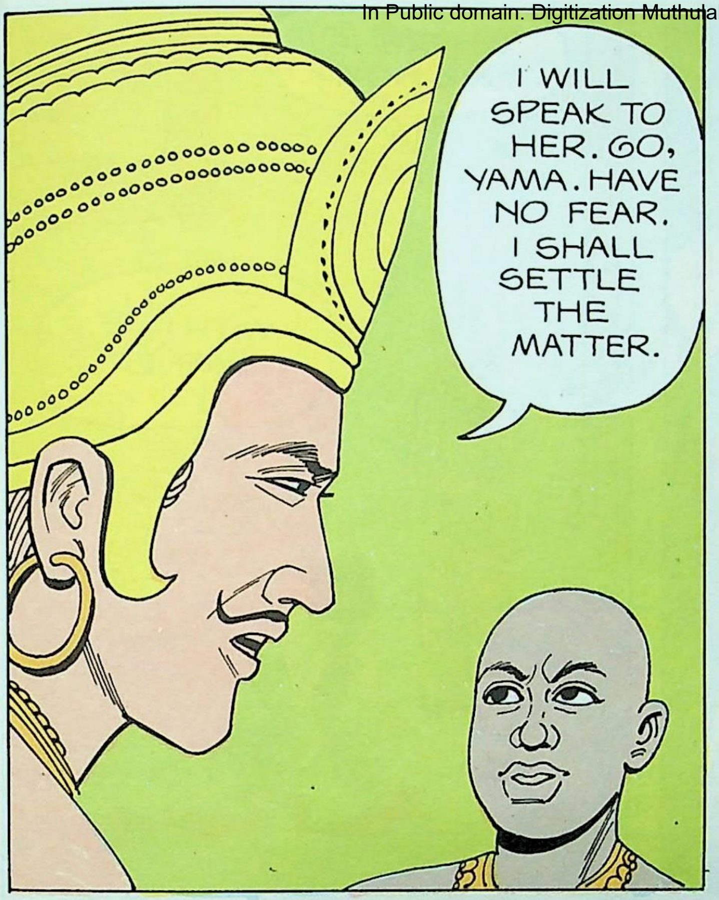

SO THESE ARE HER CHILDREN.

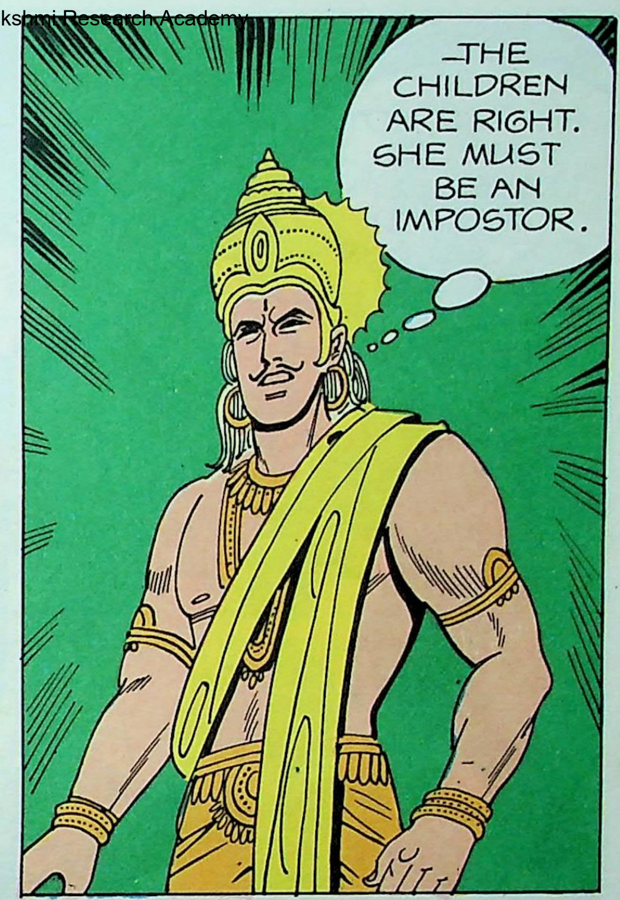

CHHAYA WAS HAPPY IN HER NEW HOME.
POOR SANJNA HAD TO GIVE UP ALL THIS. WILL SHE EVER RETURN?

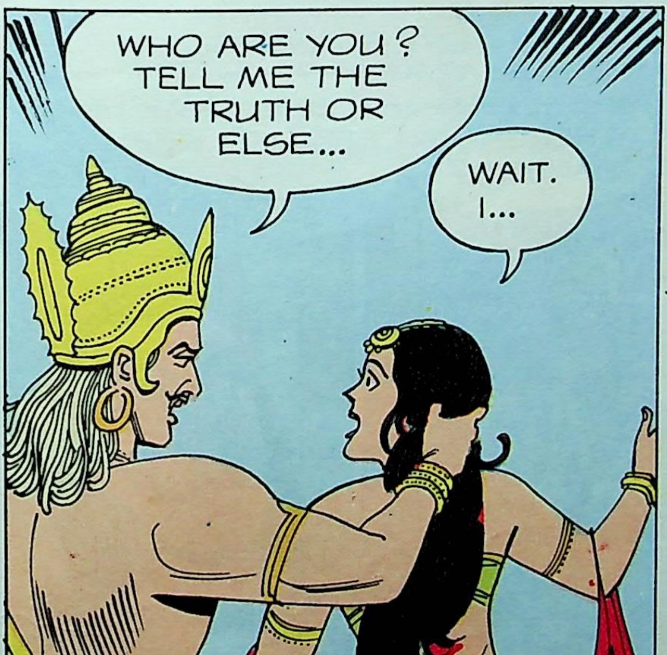

CHHAYA SOON HAD A SON.
I MUST NOT FORGET THAT I AM ONLY SANJNA'S SHADOW.

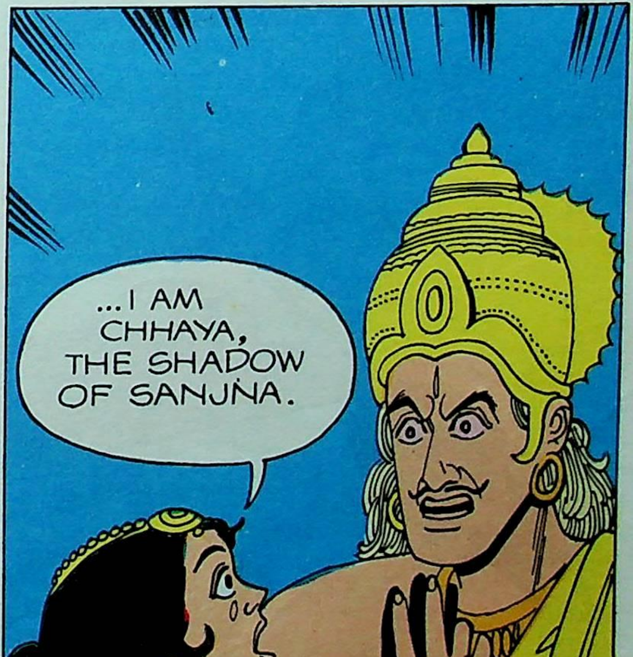

THEN ANOTHER SON AND A DAUGHTER WERE BORN TO HER.
SANJNA WILL NOT RETURN.
CHHAYA LOVED HER CHILDREN AND SPENT MOST OF HER TIME CARING FOR THEM.
BUT ALAS! SHE DID NOT CARE FOR SANJNA'S CHILDREN IN THE SAME MANNER.
GET AWAY FROM MY SIGHT, YOU ACCURSED CHILDREN.
COME, MY DEAR ONE. LET US GO TO YOUR FATHER.

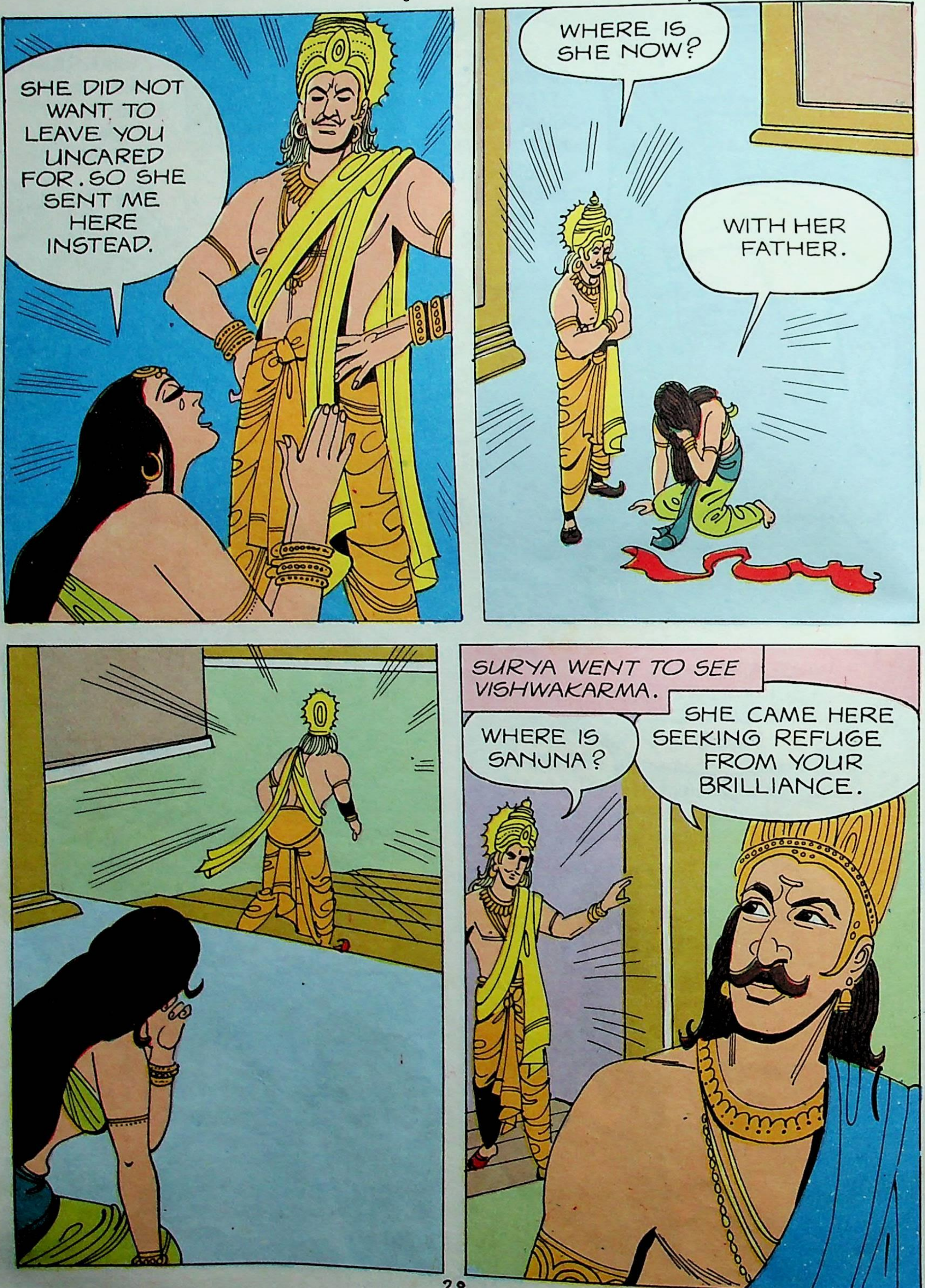

MANU FORGAVE HER FOR THIS BUT YAMA COULD NOT.
THERE SHE IS ! NOW CRUEL TO YAMUNA. MOTHER, WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO DESERVE THIS ?
HOW I WISH I WERE MOTHERLESS.
STOP! YOU SHALL NOT TOUCH MY SISTER.
INSOLENT BOY! MAY YOUR FOOT FALL OFF !
YAMA DECIDED TO SPEAK OUT TO HIS FATHER. AFTER HE HAD FINISHED –
FATHER, THAT WOMAN IS NOT OUR MOTHER!
I AGREE. A SON MAY CHANGE IN HIS AFFECTIONS BUT A MOTHER NEVER CEASES TO CARE.

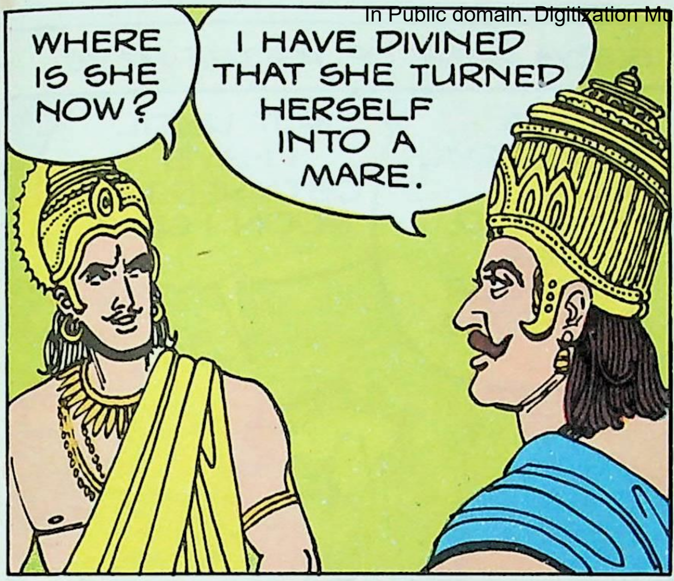

I WILL SPEAK TO HER. GO, YAMA. HAVE NO FEAR. I SHALL SETTLE THE MATTER.

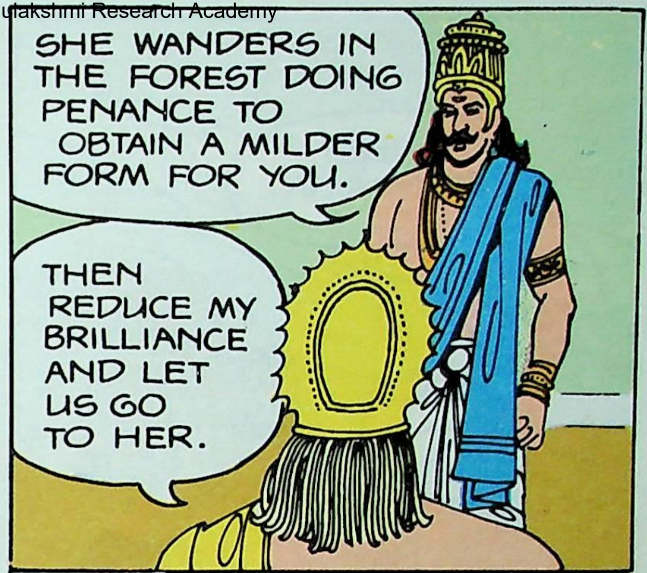

—THE CHILDREN ARE RIGHT. SHE MUST BE AN IMPOSTOR.

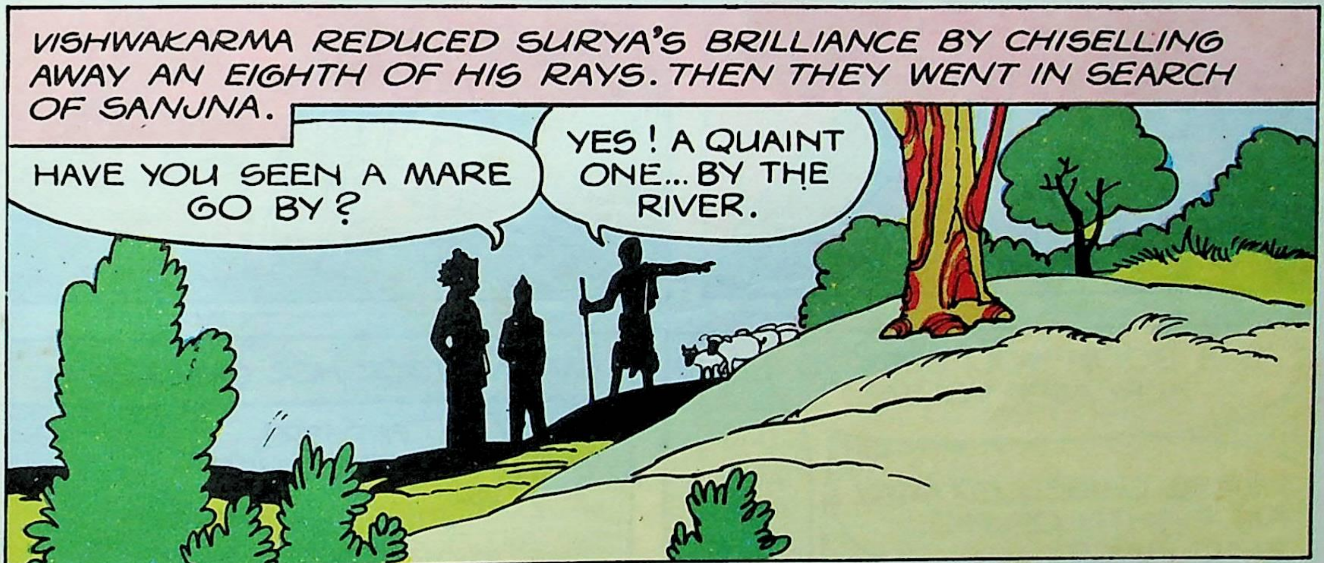

WHO ARE YOU? TELL ME THE TRUTH OR ELSE...
WAIT. I...


...I AM CHHAYA, THE SHADOW OF SANJNA.

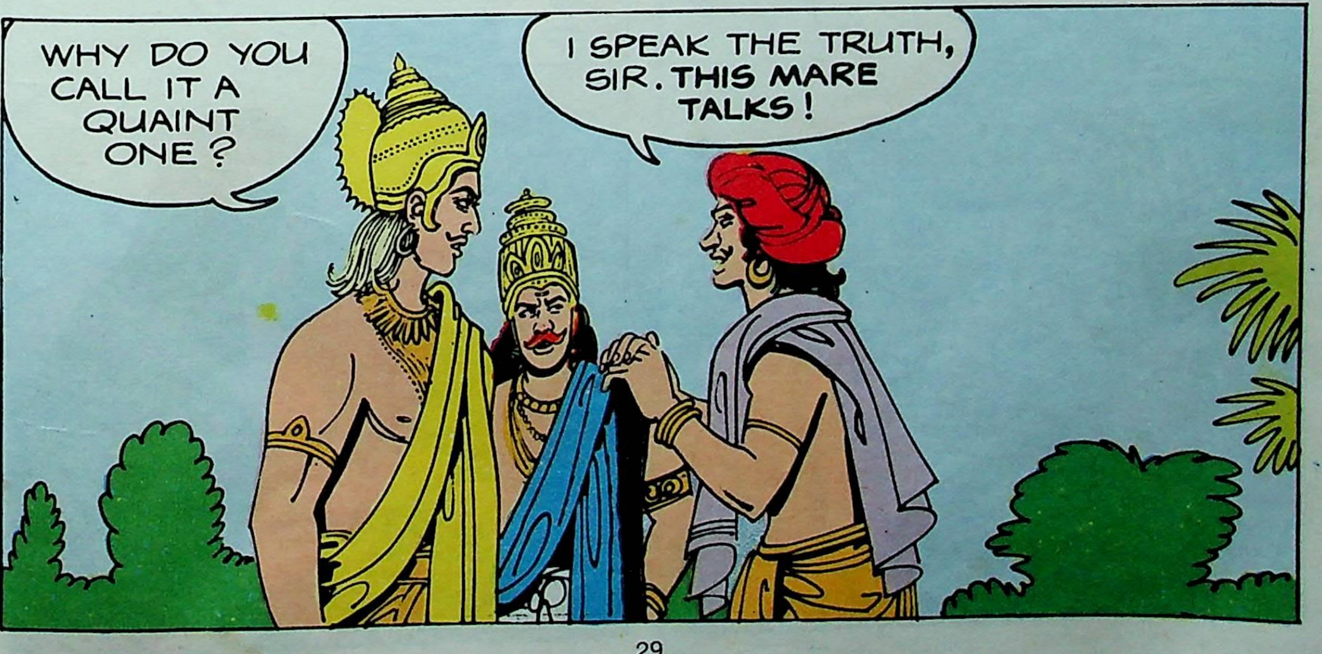

SHE DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOU UNCARED FOR. SO SHE SENT ME HERE INSTEAD.
WHERE IS SHE NOW?
WITH HER FATHER.
SURYA WENT TO SEE VISHWAKARMA.
WHERE IS SANJUNA?
SHE CAME HERE SEEKING REFUGE FROM YOUR BRILLIANCE.

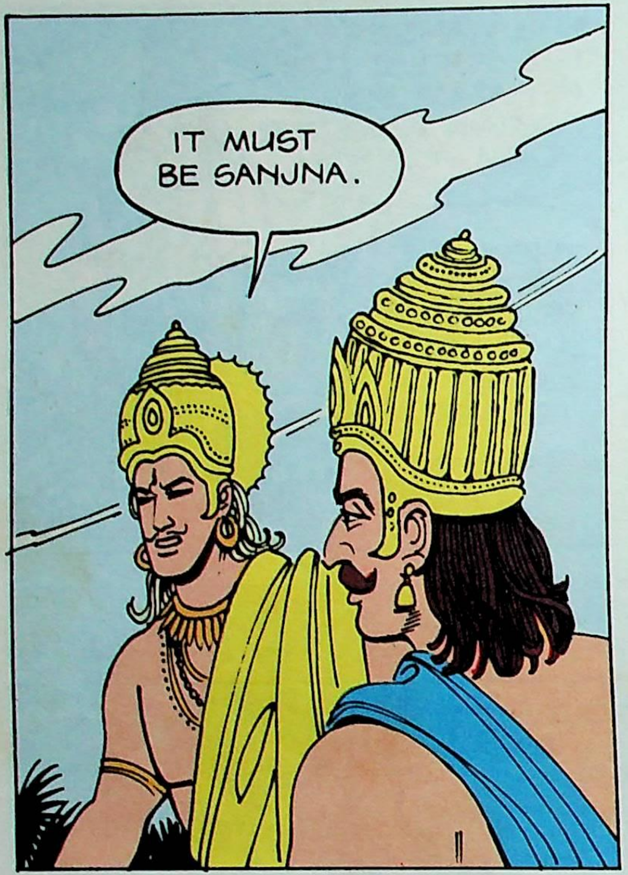

WHERE IS SHE NOW?
I HAVE DIVINED THAT SHE TURNED HERSELF INTO A MARE.

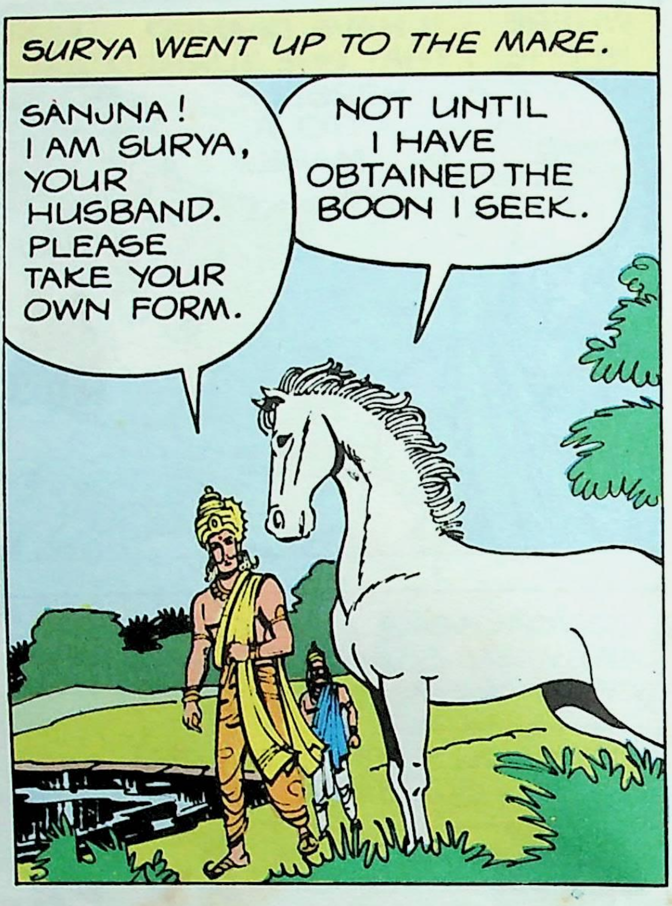

SHE WANDERS IN THE FOREST DOING PENANCE TO OBTAIN A MILDER FORM FOR YOU.
THEN REDUCE MY BRILLIANCE AND LET US GO TO HER.

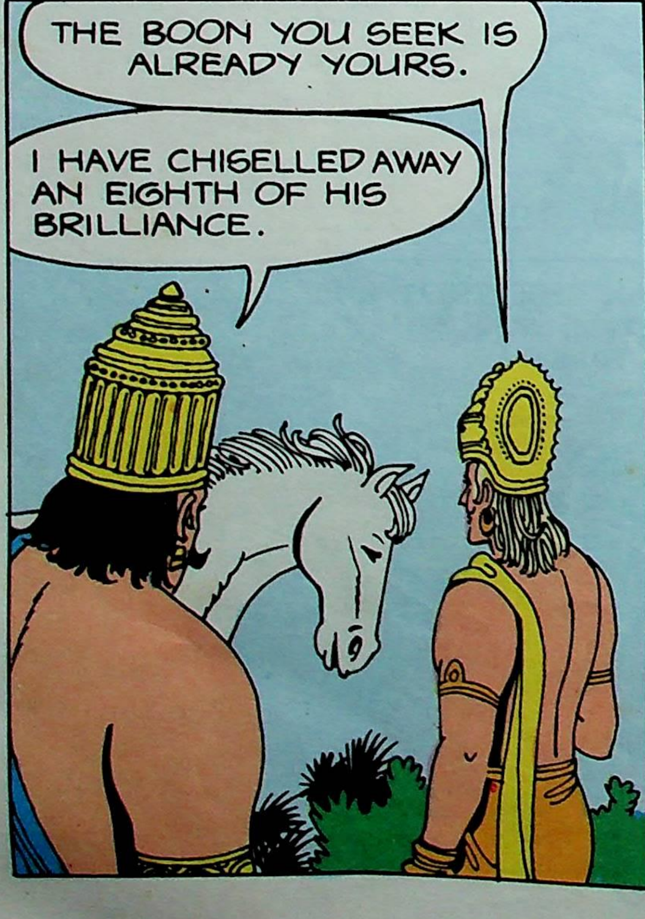

VISHWAKARMA REDUCED SURYA'S BRILLIANCE BY CHISELLING AWAY AN EIGHTH OF HIS RAYS. THEN THEY WENT IN SEARCH OF SANJNA.

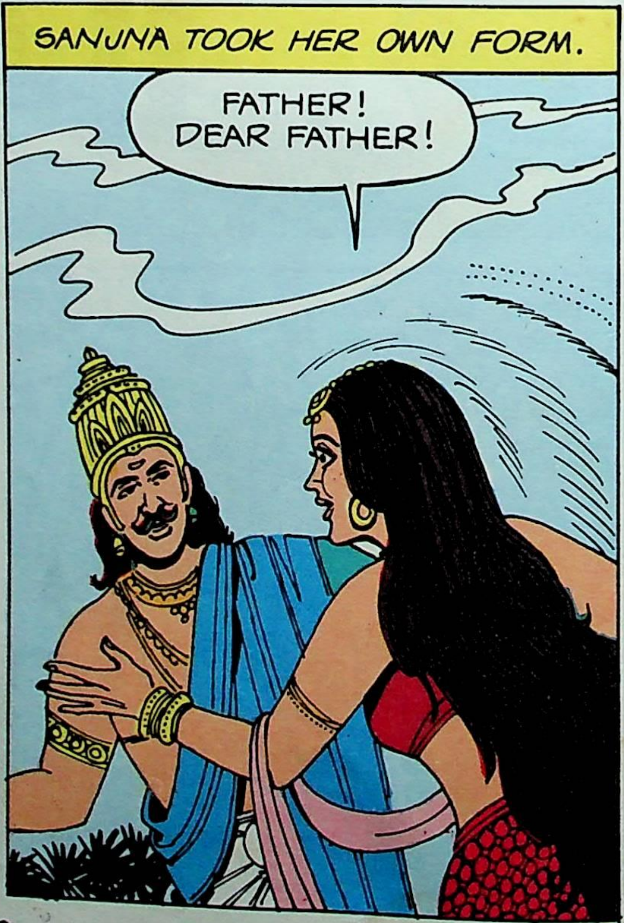
HAVE YOU SEEN A MARE GO BY?
YES! A QUAINT ONE... BY THE RIVER.

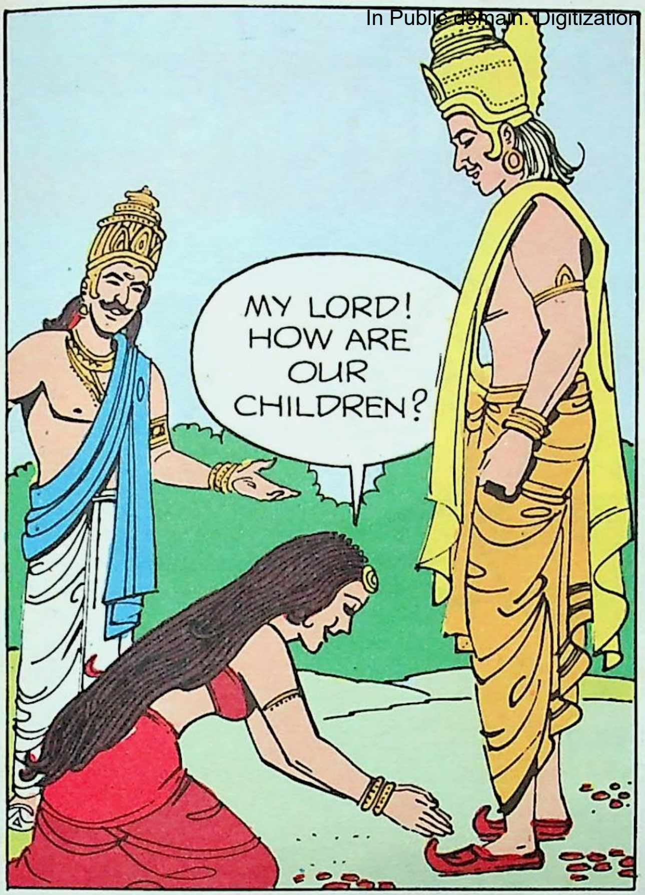

WHY DO YOU CALL IT A QUAINT ONE?
I SPEAK THE TRUTH, SIR. **THIS MARE TALKS!**

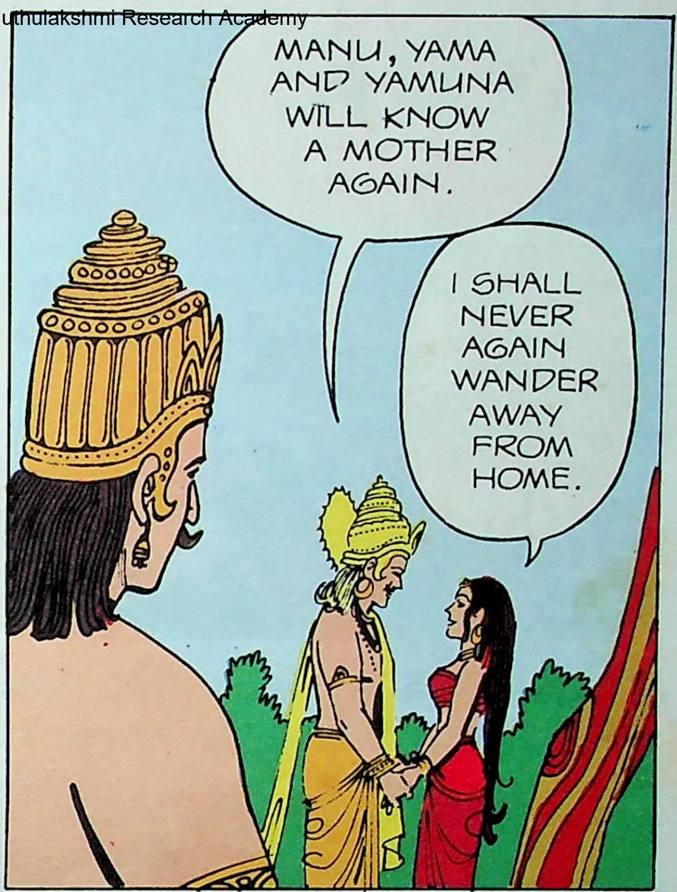

IT MUST BE SANJUNA.

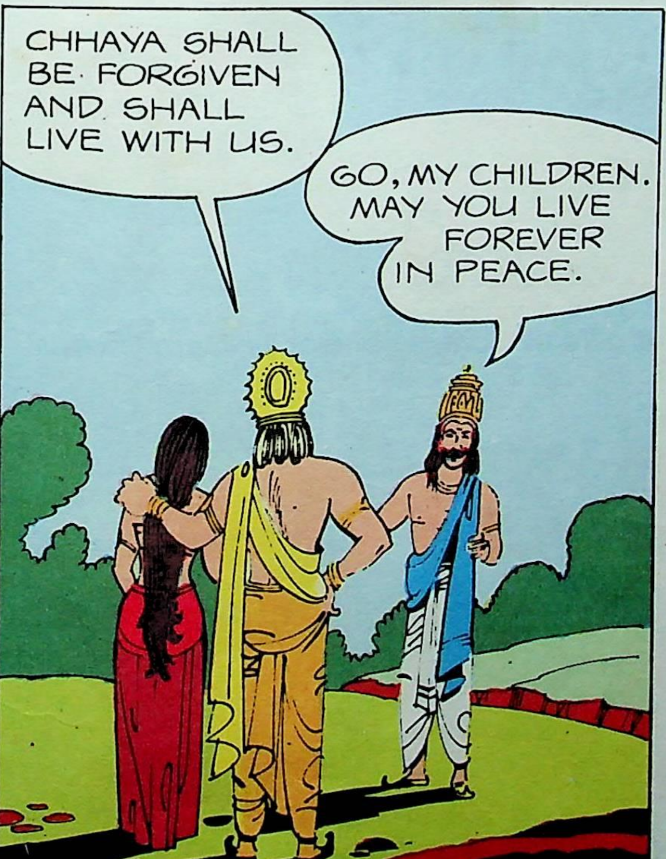

SURYA WENT UP TO THE MARE.
SANJUNA! I AM SURYA, YOUR HUSBAND. PLEASE TAKE YOUR OWN FORM.
NOT UNTIL I HAVE OBTAINED THE BOON I SEEK.


THE BOON YOU SEEK IS ALREADY YOURS.
I HAVE CHISELLED AWAY AN EIGHTH OF HIS BRILLIANCE.

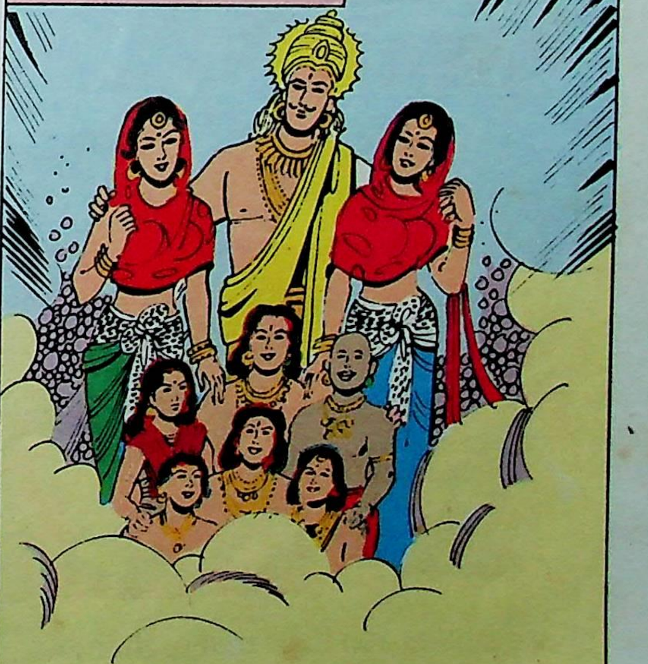

SANJUNA TOOK HER OWN FORM.
FATHER! DEAR FATHER!


MY LORD! HOW ARE OUR CHILDREN?


MANU, YAMA AND YAMUNA WILL KNOW A MOTHER AGAIN.
I SHALL NEVER AGAIN WANDER AWAY FROM HOME.


CHHAYA SHALL BE FORGIVEN AND SHALL LIVE WITH US.
GO, MY CHILDREN. MAY YOU LIVE FOREVER IN PEACE.

SO SURYA AND SANUNA WENT BACK TO HIS ABODE IN THE SKIES AND LIVED THERE IN HAPPINESS WITH CHHAYA AND THE CHILDREN.



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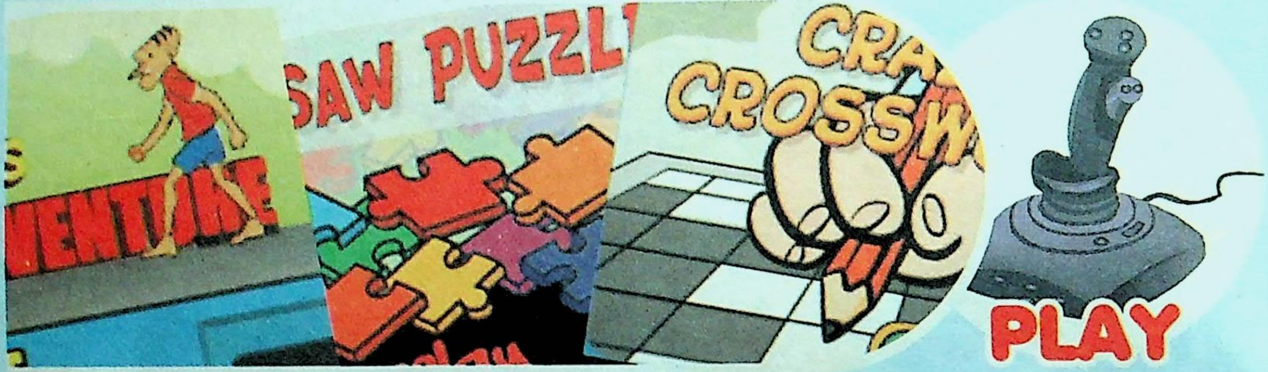
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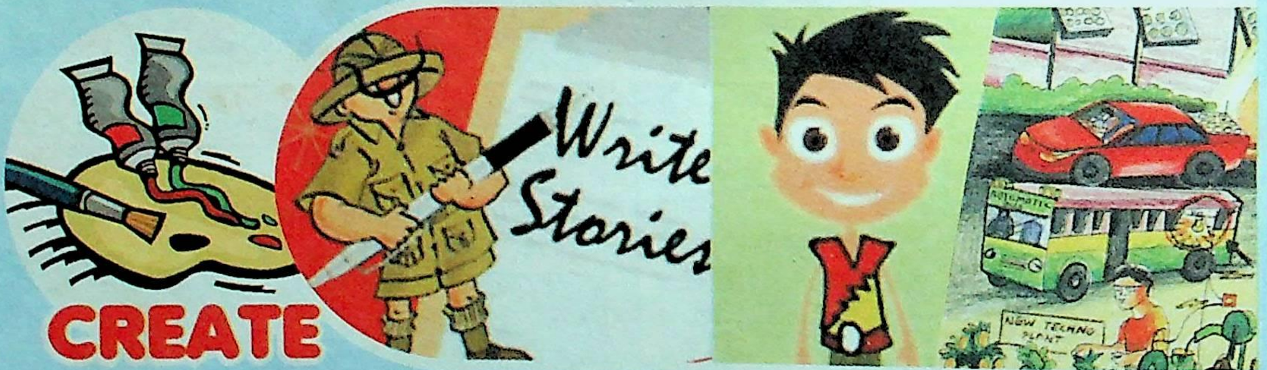
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SATI AND SHIVA

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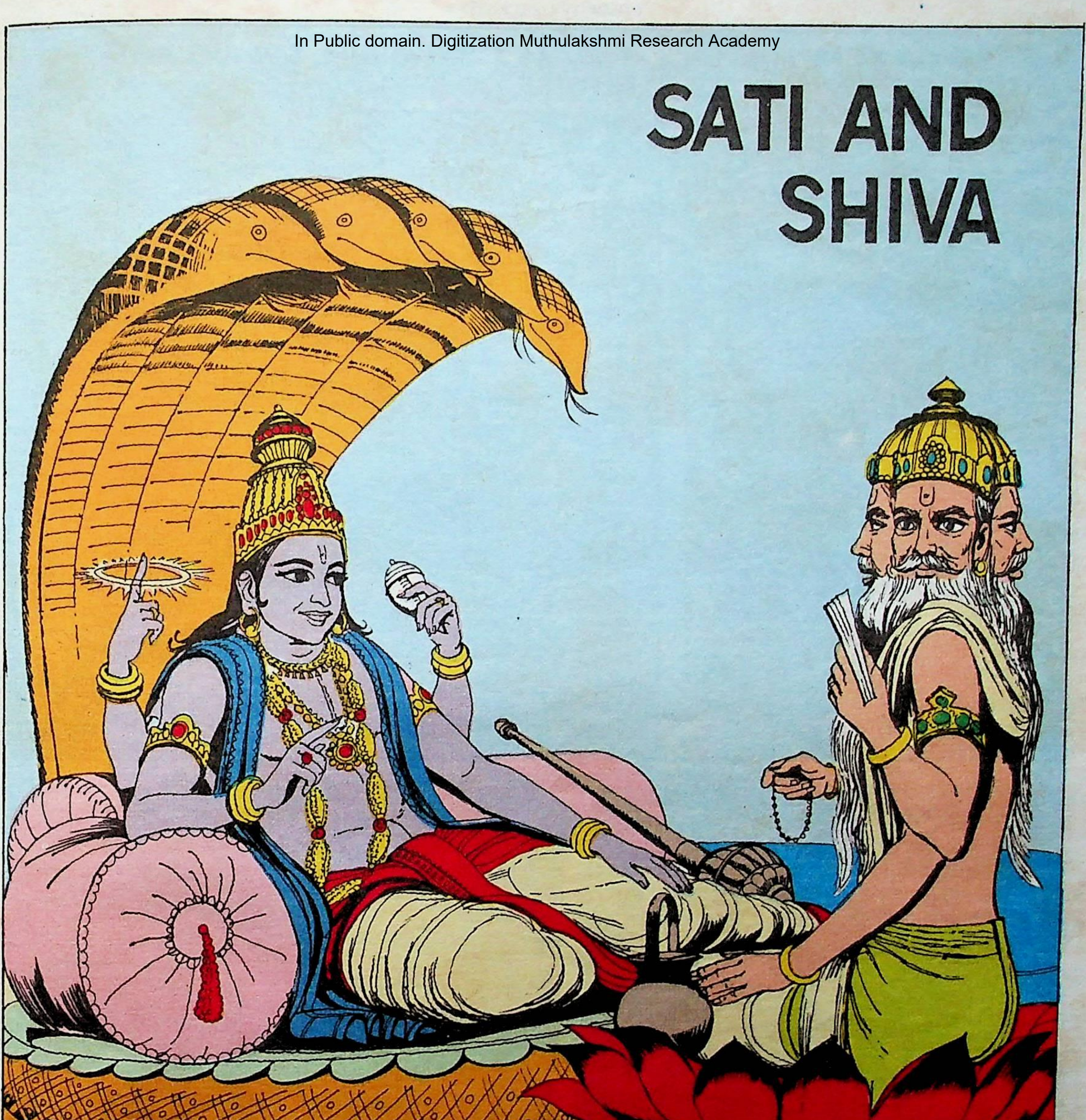
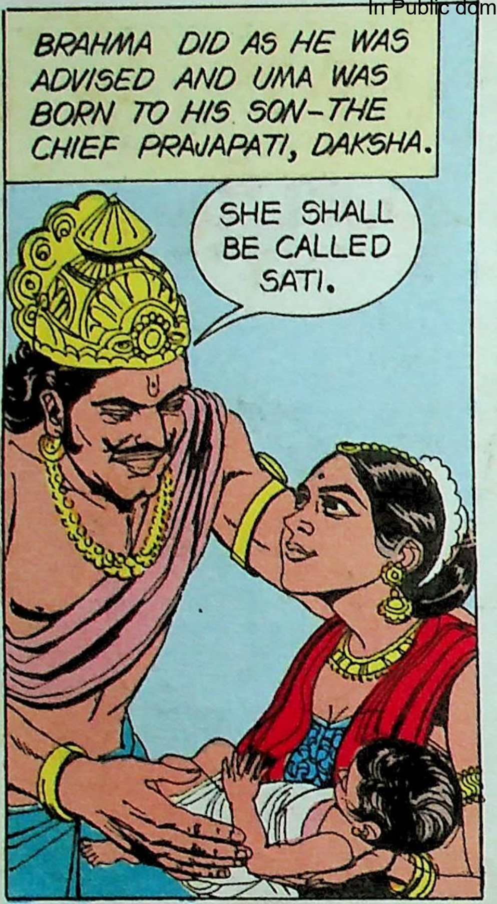
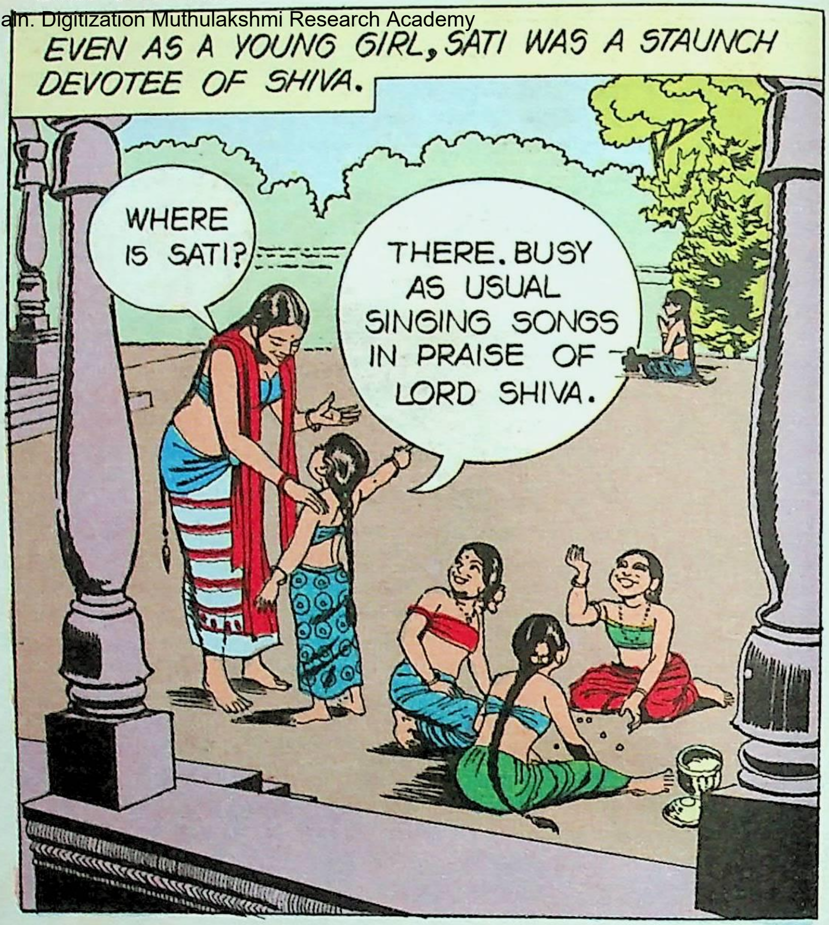
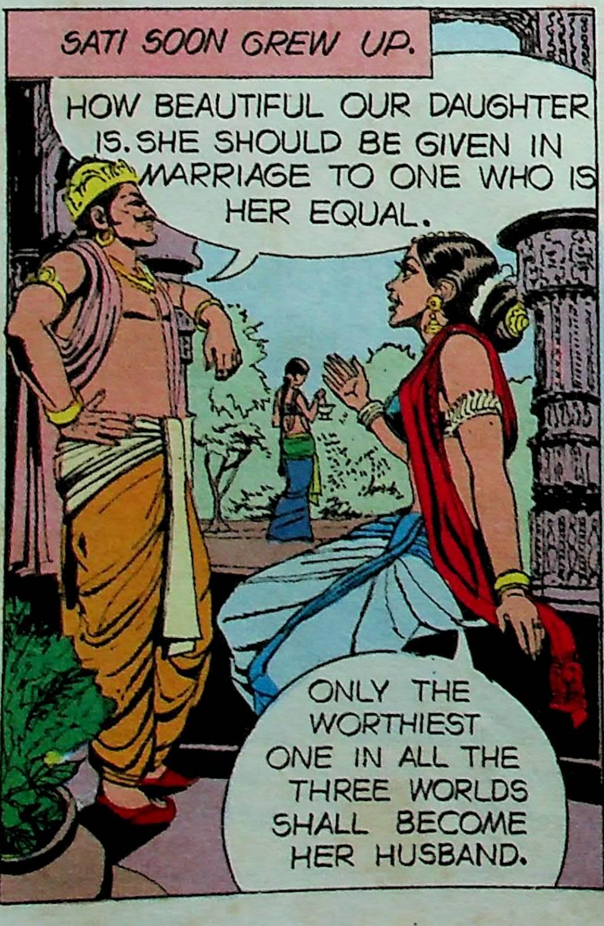
SATI AND SHIVA

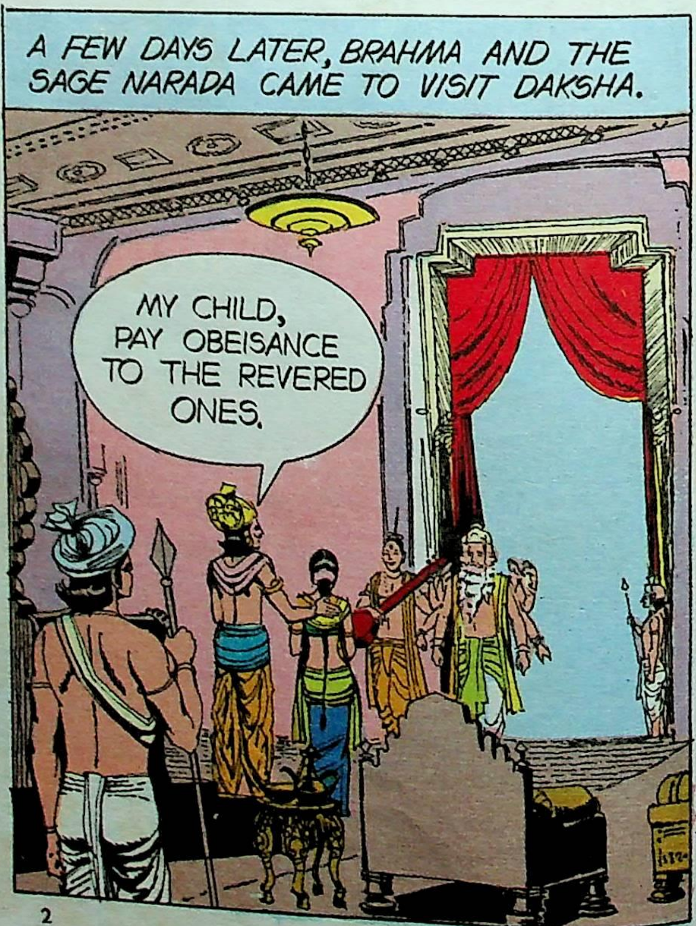


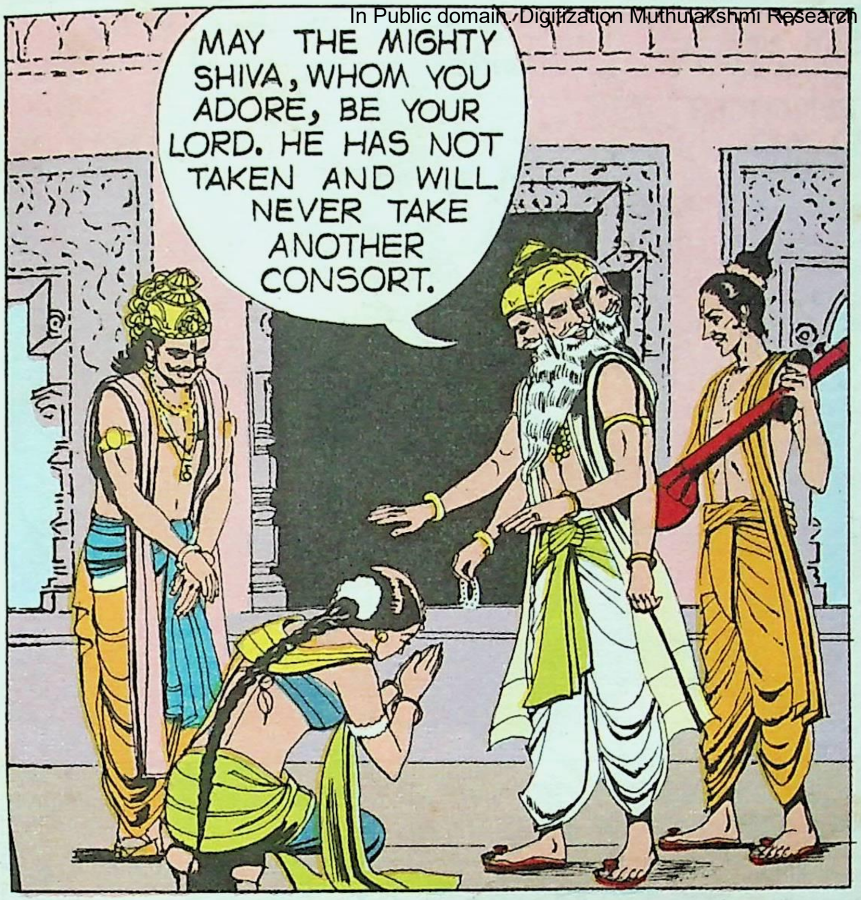
BRAHMA WANTED THE ASCETIC SHIVA TO GET MARRIED. VISHNU ADVISED HIM TO SERVE THE GODDESS UMA, BEG HER TO TAKE BIRTH ON EARTH, AND BECOME SHIVA'S CONSORT.

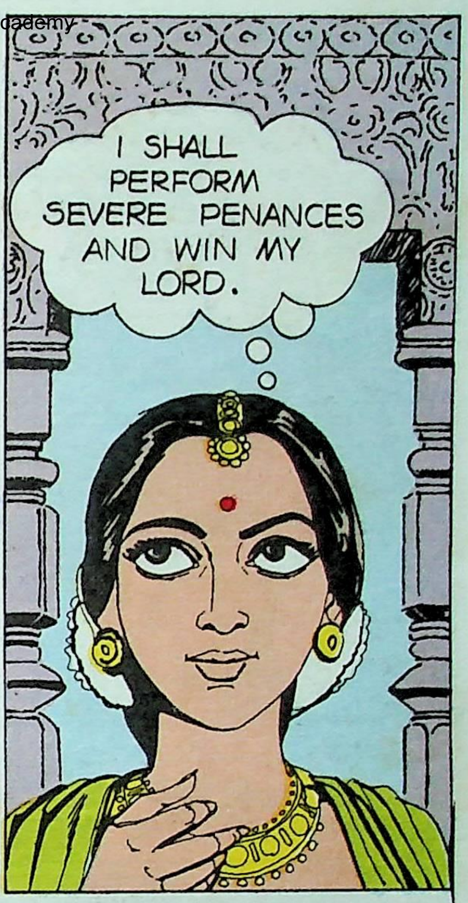

BRAHMA DID AS HE WAS ADVISED AND UMA WAS BORN TO HIS SON-THE CHIEF PRAJAPATI, DAKSHA.
SHE SHALL BE CALLED SATI.

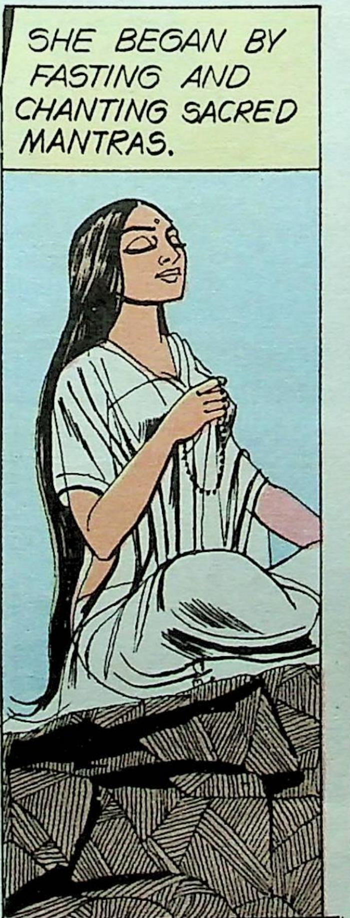

EVEN AS A YOUNG GIRL, SATI WAS A STAUNCH DEVOTEE OF SHIVA.
WHERE IS SATI?
THERE. BUSY AS USUAL SINGING SONGS IN PRAISE OF LORD SHIVA.

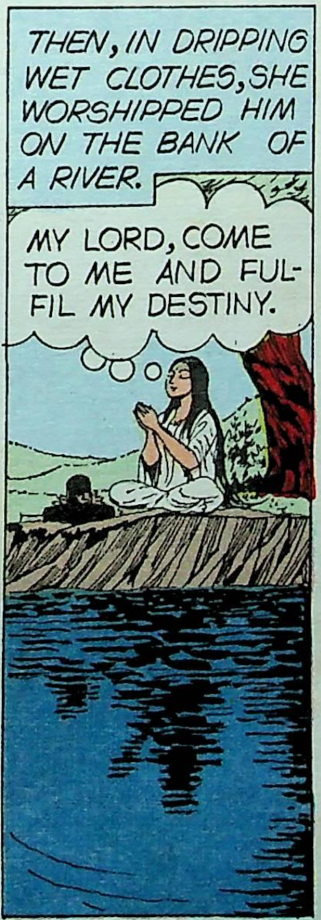

SATI SOON GREW UP.
HOW BEAUTIFUL OUR DAUGHTER IS. SHE SHOULD BE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE TO ONE WHO IS HER EQUAL.
ONLY THE WORTHIEST ONE IN ALL THE THREE WORLDS SHALL BECOME HER HUSBAND.

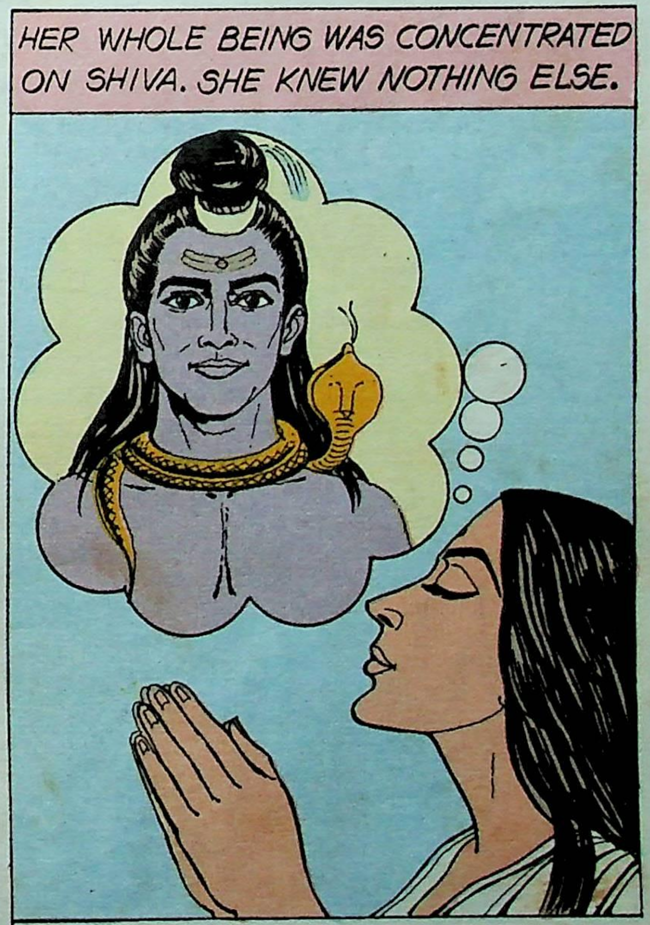

A FEW DAYS LATER, BRAHMA AND THE SAGE NARADA CAME TO VISIT DAKSHA.
MY CHILD, PAY OBEISANCE TO THE REVERED ONES.

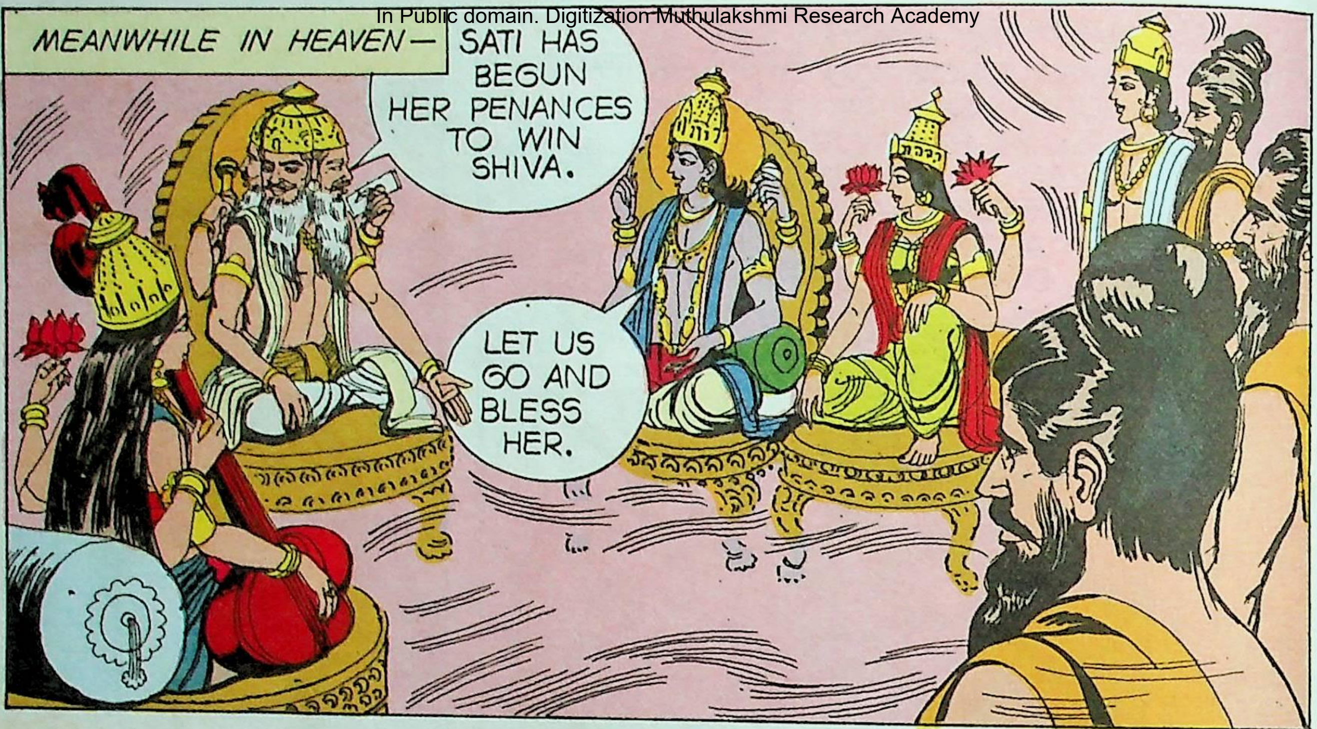

MAY THE MIGHTY SHIVA, WHOM YOU ADORE, BE YOUR LORD. HE HAS NOT TAKEN AND WILL NEVER TAKE ANOTHER CONSORT.

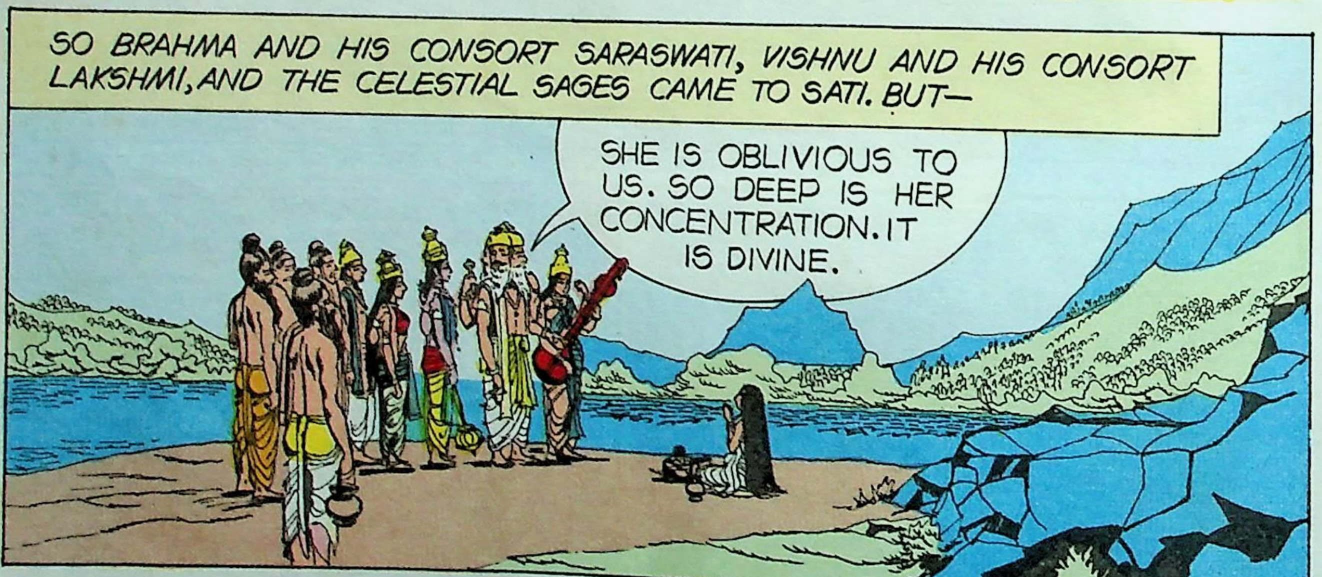

I SHALL PERFORM SEVERE PENANCES AND WIN MY LORD.

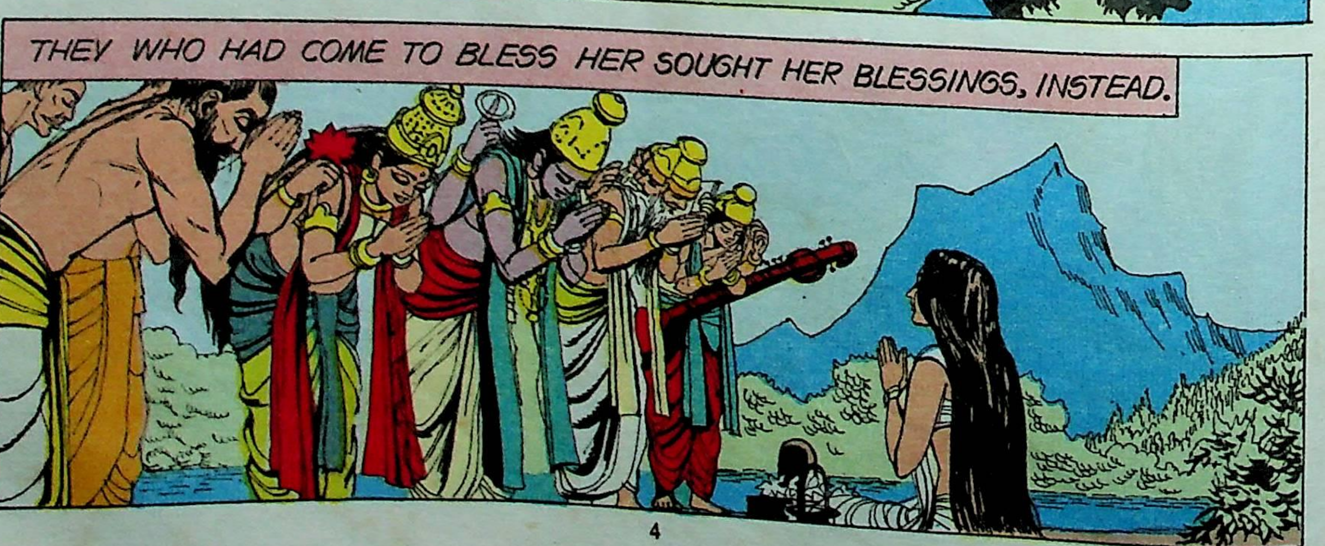

SHE BEGAN BY FASTING AND CHANTING SACRED MANTRAS.

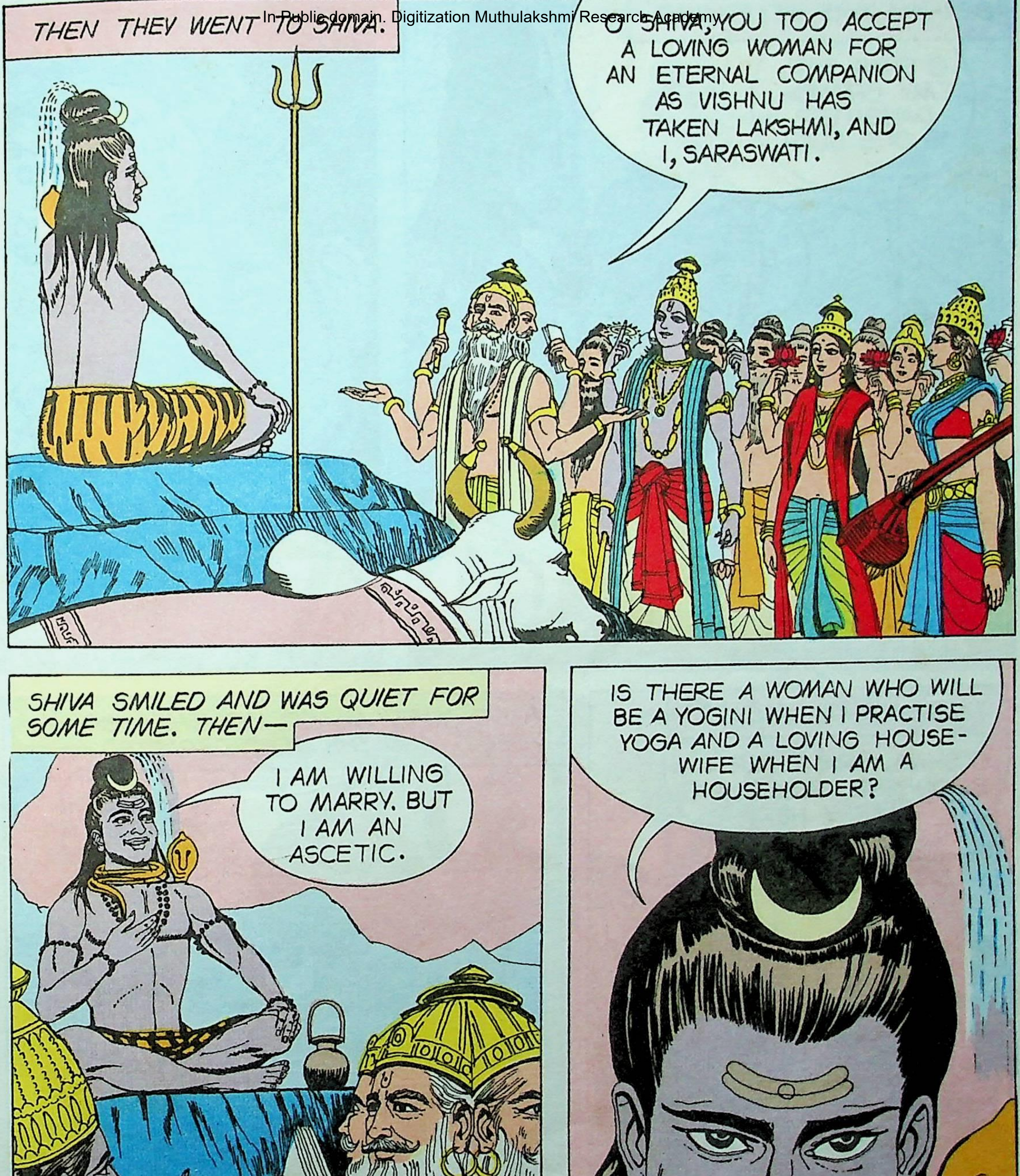

THEN, IN DRIPPING WET CLOTHES, SHE WORSHIPPED HIM ON THE BANK OF A RIVER.
MY LORD, COME TO ME AND FULFIL MY DESTINY.

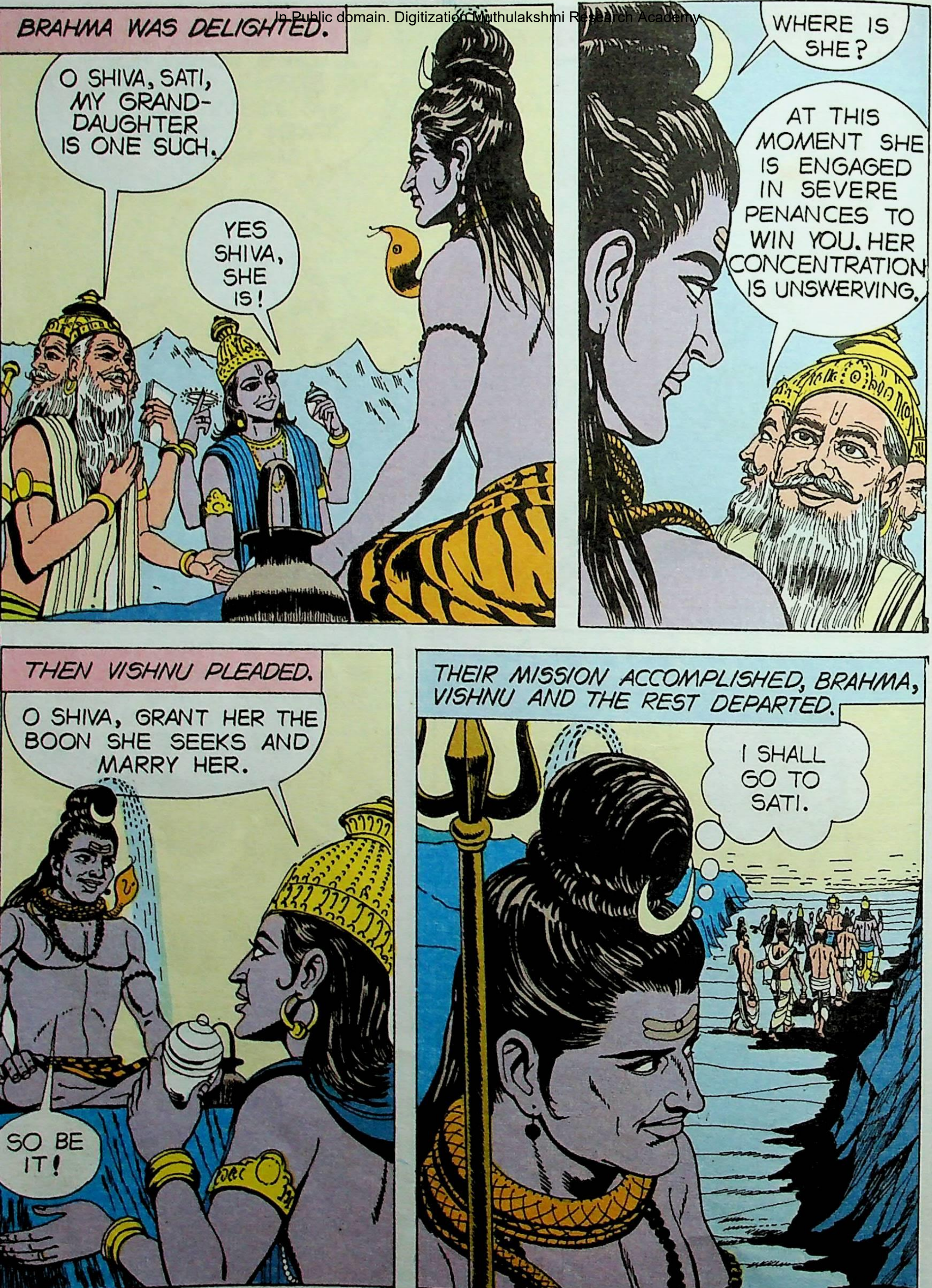

HER WHOLE BEING WAS CONCENTRATED ON SHIVA. SHE KNEW NOTHING ELSE.

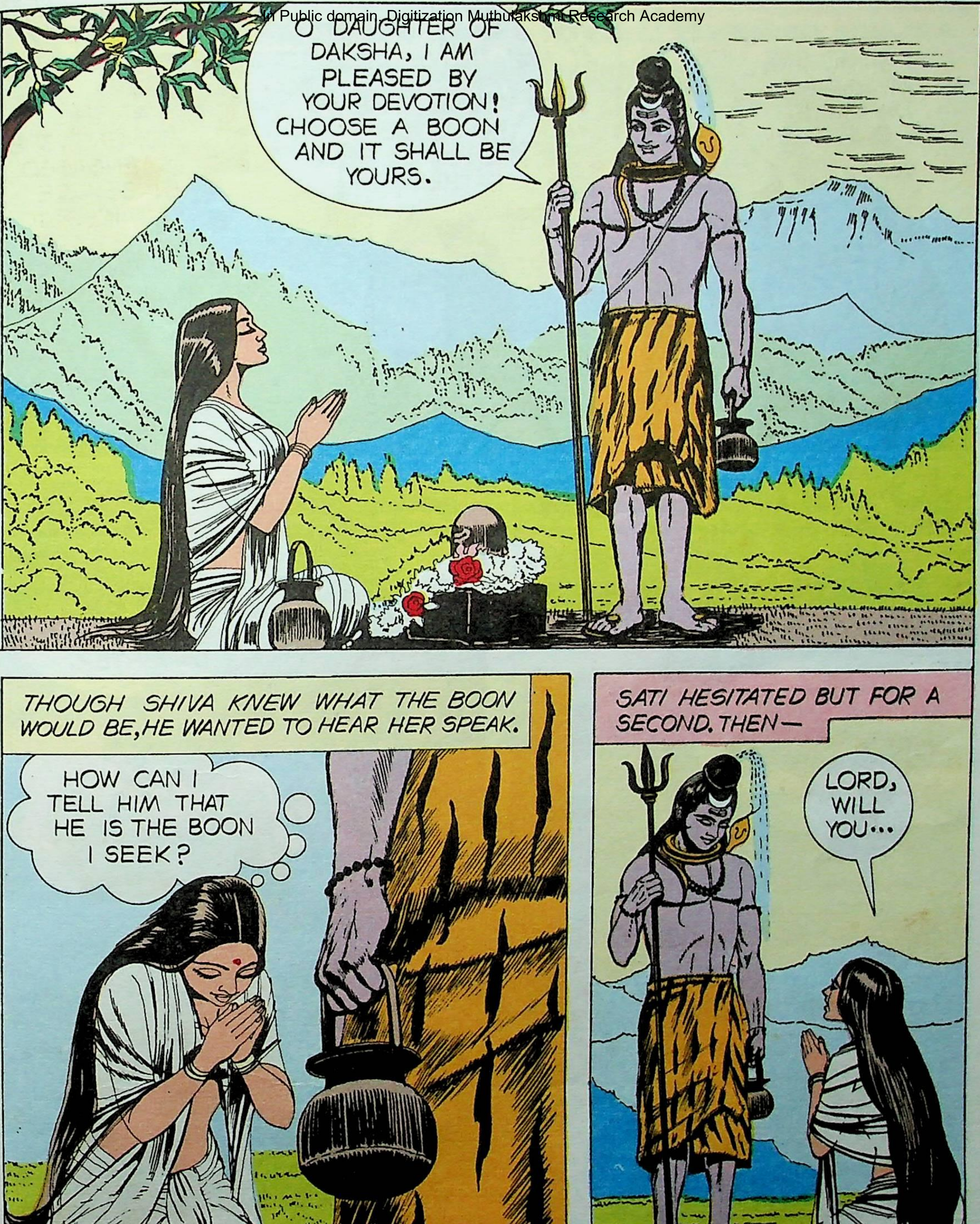

MEANWHILE IN HEAVEN—
SATI HAS BEGUN HER PENANCES TO WIN SHIVA.
LET US GO AND BLESS HER.

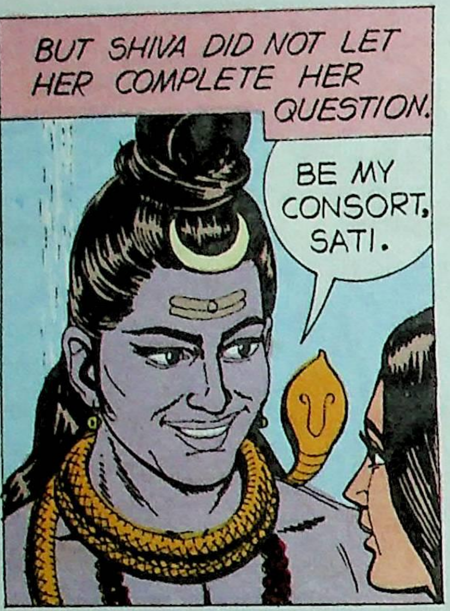

SO BRAHMA AND HIS CONSORT SARASWATI, VISHNU AND HIS CONSORT LAKSHMI, AND THE CELESTIAL SAGES CAME TO SATI. BUT—
SHE IS OBLIVIOUS TO US. SO DEEP IS HER CONCENTRATION. IT IS DIVINE.

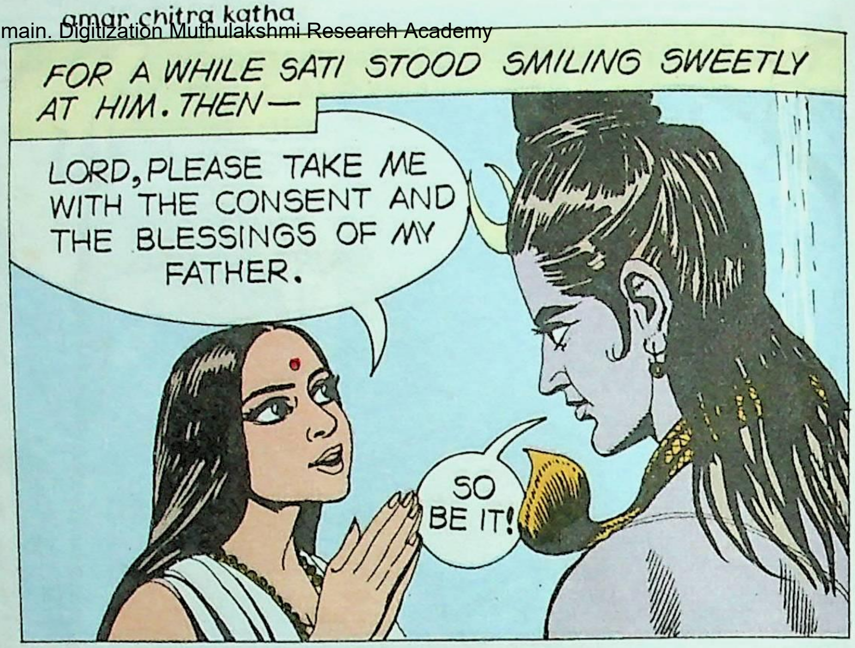

THEY WHO HAD COME TO BLESS HER SOUGHT HER BLESSINGS, INSTEAD.

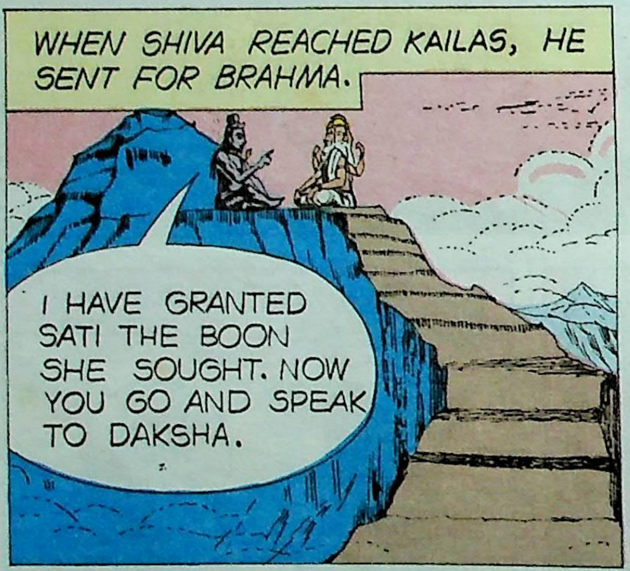

THEN THEY WENT TO SHIVA.
O SHIVA, YOU TOO ACCEPT A LOVING WOMAN FOR AN ETERNAL COMPANION AS VISHNU HAS TAKEN LAKSHMI, AND I, SARASWATI.
SHIVA SMILED AND WAS QUIET FOR SOME TIME. THEN—
I AM WILLING TO MARRY. BUT I AM AN ASCETIC.
IS THERE A WOMAN WHO WILL BE A YOGINI WHEN I PRACTISE YOGA AND A LOVING HOUSEWIFE WHEN I AM A HOUSEHOLDER?

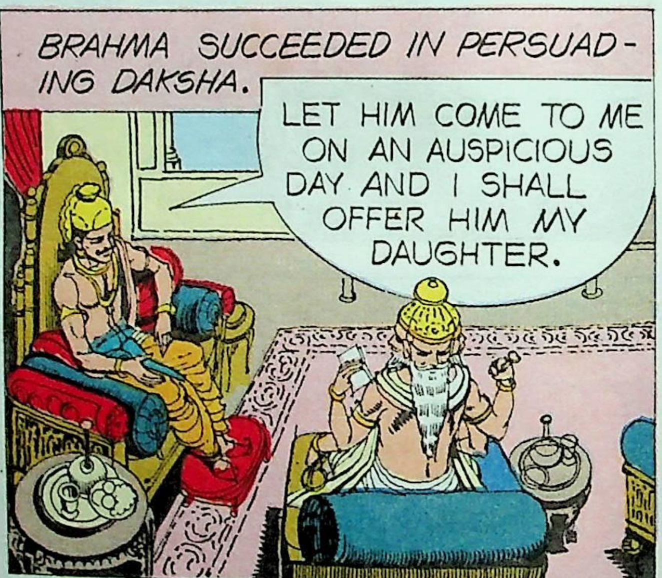

BRAHMA WAS DELIGHTED.
O SHIVA, SATI, MY GRAND-DAUGHTER IS ONE SUCH.
YES SHIVA, SHE IS!
WHERE IS SHE?
AT THIS MOMENT SHE IS ENGAGED IN SEVERE PENANCES TO WIN YOU. HER CONCENTRATION IS UNSWERVING.
THEN VISHNU PLEADED.
O SHIVA, GRANT HER THE BOON SHE SEEKS AND MARRY HER.
SO BE IT!
THEIR MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, BRAHMA, VISHNU AND THE REST DEPARTED.
I SHALL GO TO SATI.

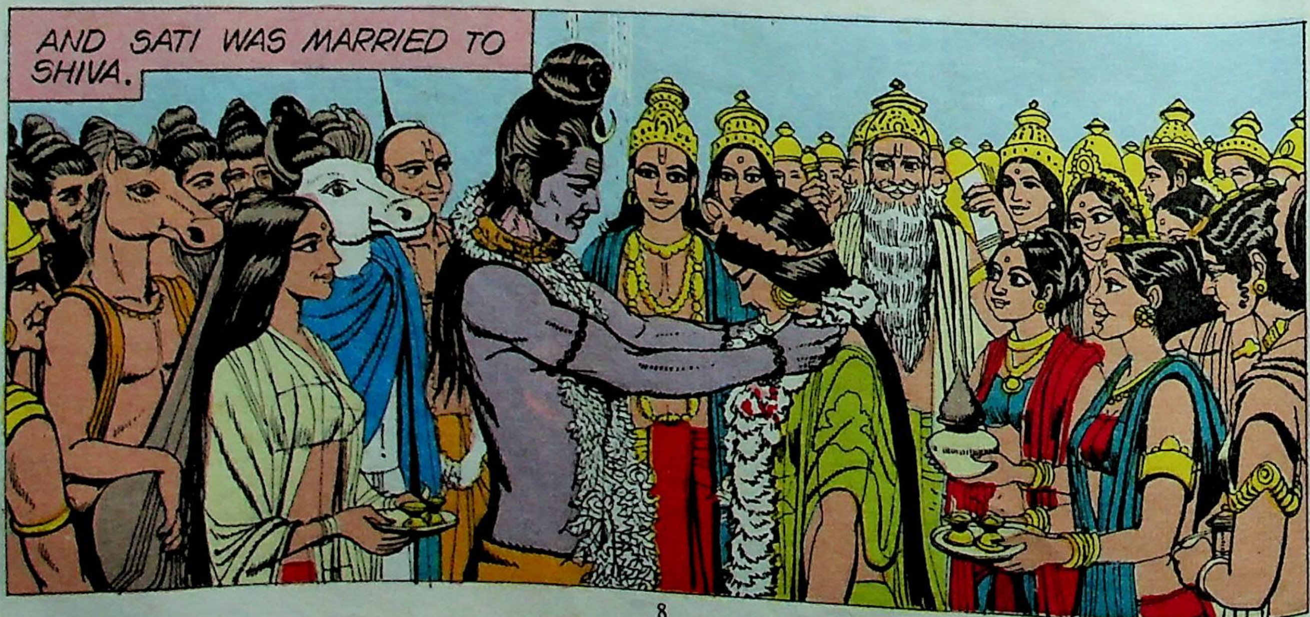

O DAUGHTER OF DAKSHA, I AM PLEASED BY YOUR DEVOTION! CHOOSE A BOON AND IT SHALL BE YOURS.
THOUGH SHIVA KNEW WHAT THE BOON WOULD BE, HE WANTED TO HEAR HER SPEAK.
HOW CAN I TELL HIM THAT HE IS THE BOON I SEEK?
SATI HESITATED BUT FOR A SECOND. THEN—
LORD, WILL YOU...

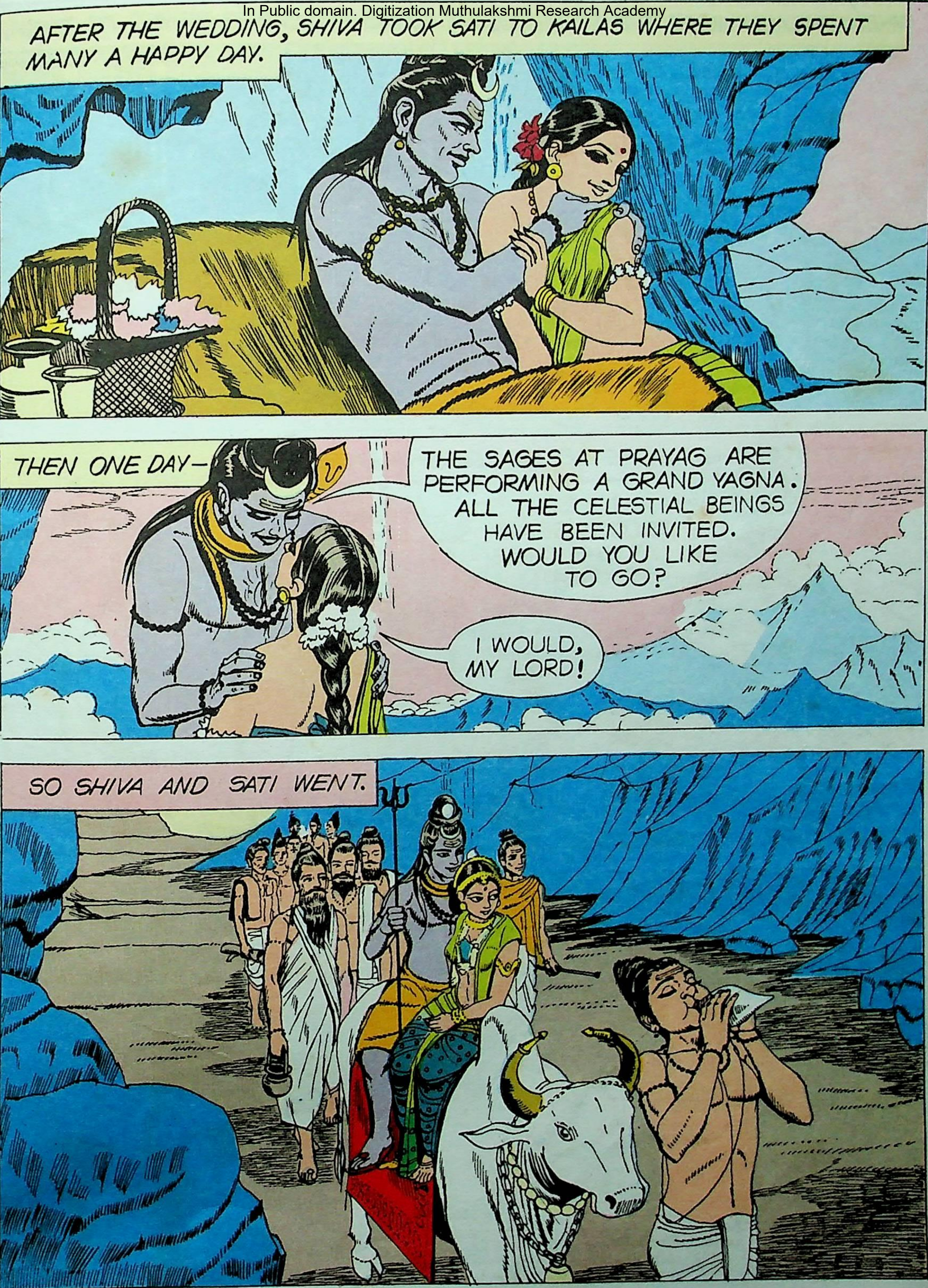

BUT SHIVA DID NOT LET HER COMPLETE HER QUESTION.
BE MY CONSORT, SATI.


FOR A WHILE SATI STOOD SMILING SWEETLY AT HIM. THEN—
LORD, PLEASE TAKE ME WITH THE CONSENT AND THE BLESSINGS OF MY FATHER.
SO BE IT!

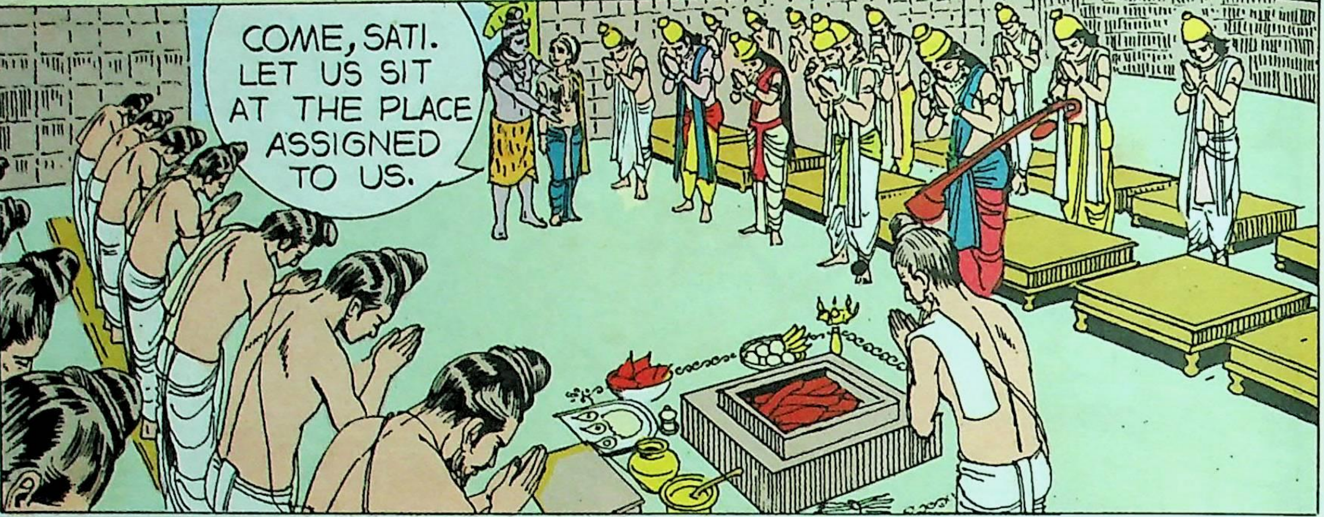

WHEN SHIVA REACHED KAILAS, HE SENT FOR BRAHMA.
I HAVE GRANTED SATI THE BOON SHE SOUGHT. NOW YOU GO AND SPEAK TO DAKSHA.


BRAHMA SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING DAKSHA.
LET HIM COME TO ME ON AN AUSPICIOUS DAY AND I SHALL OFFER HIM MY DAUGHTER.

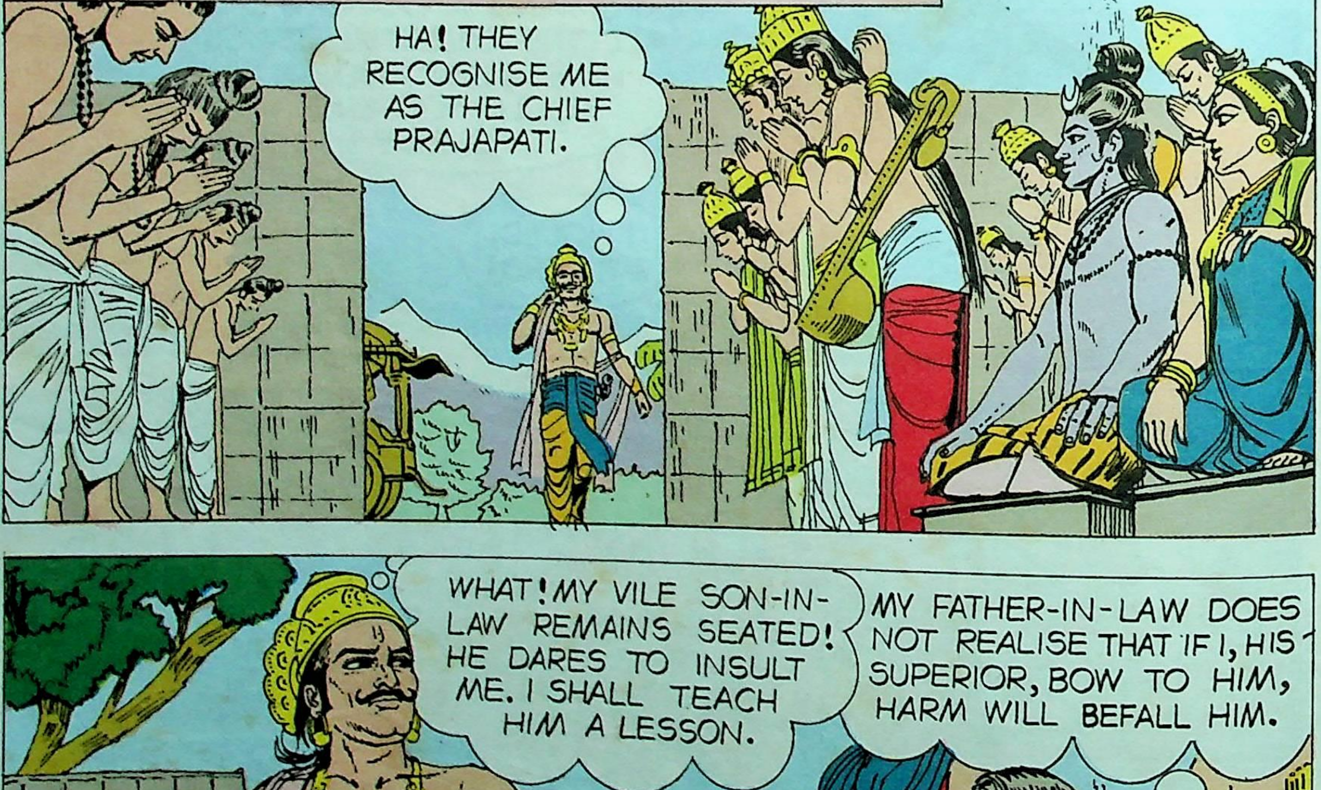

AND SATI WAS MARRIED TO SHIVA.

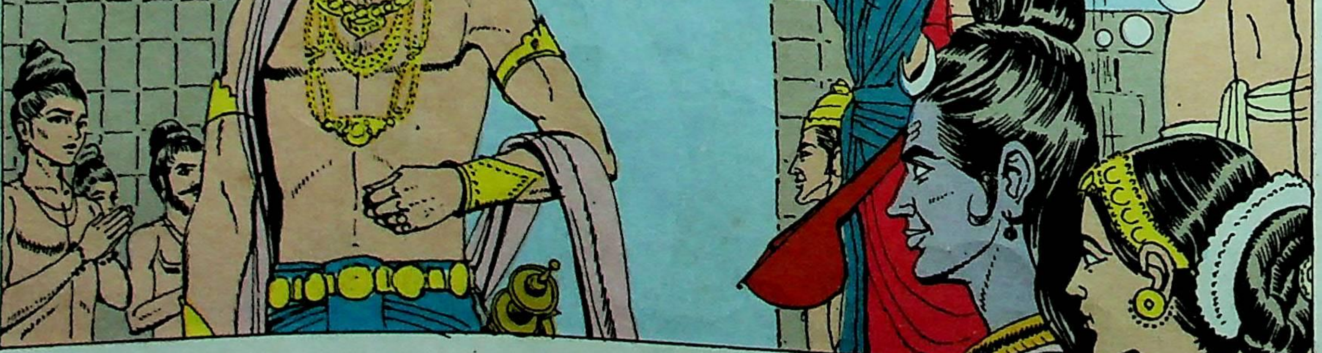

AFTER THE WEDDING, SHIVA TOOK SATI TO KAILAS WHERE THEY SPENT MANY A HAPPY DAY.
THEN ONE DAY—
THE SAGES AT PRAYAG ARE PERFORMING A GRAND YAGNA. ALL THE CELESTIAL BEINGS HAVE BEEN INVITED. WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
I WOULD, MY LORD!
SO SHIVA AND SATI WENT.

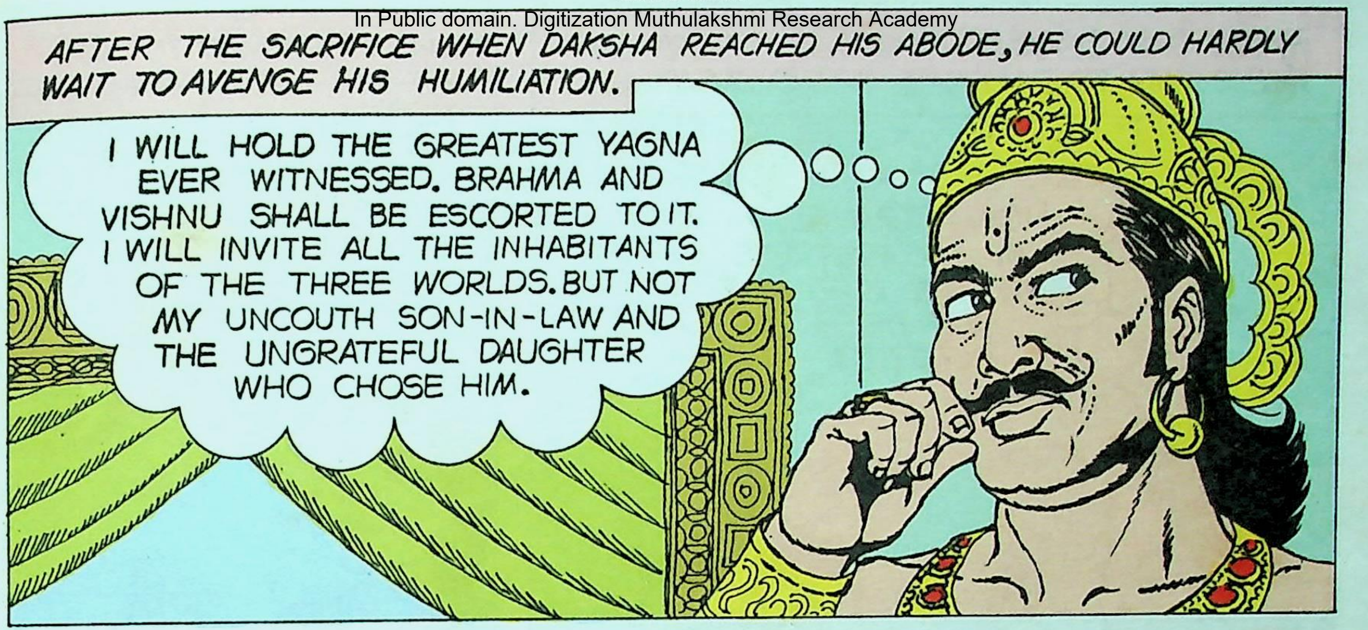
WHEN THEY ENTERED THE GROUNDS, THE DEVAS AND SAGES BOWED TO THEM.

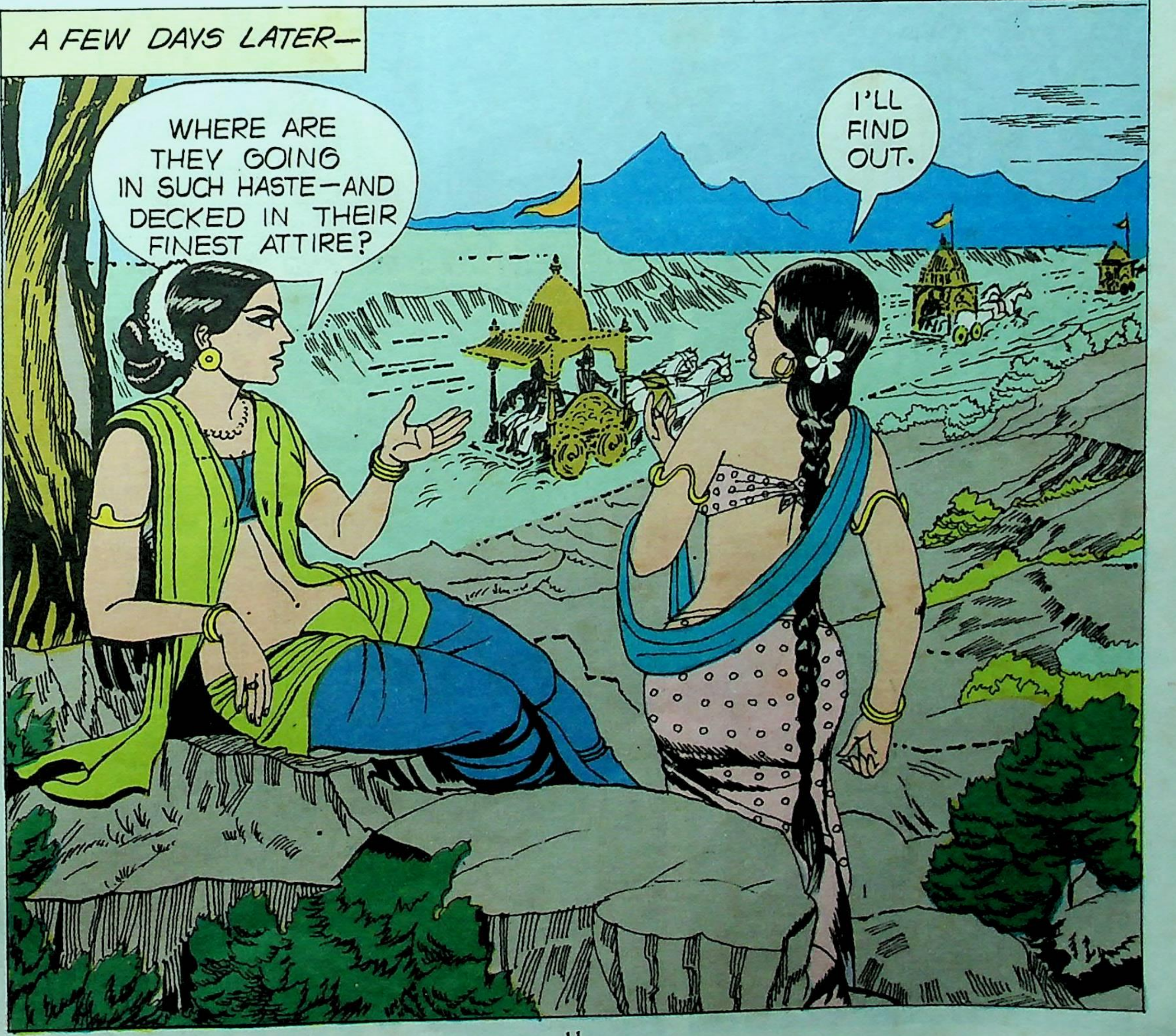

COME, SATI. LET US SIT AT THE PLACE ASSIGNED TO US.

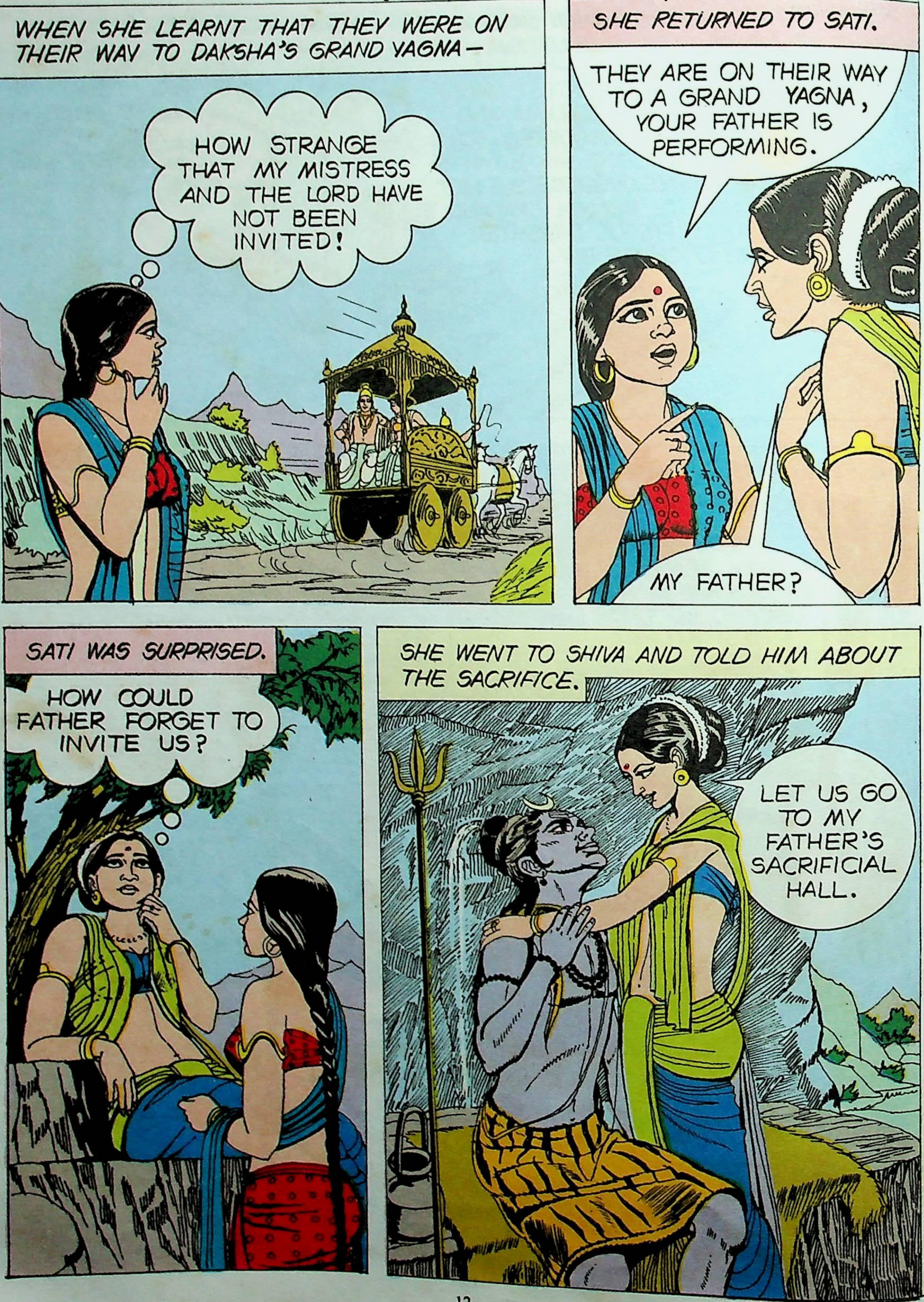
AS SOON AS THEY WERE SEATED, DAKSHA ENTERED.


HA! THEY RECOGNISE ME AS THE CHIEF PRAJAPATI.


WHAT! MY VILE SON-IN-LAW REMAINS SEATED! HE DARES TO INSULT ME. I SHALL TEACH HIM A LESSON.
MY FATHER-IN-LAW DOES NOT REALISE THAT IF I, HIS SUPERIOR, BOW TO HIM, HARM WILL BEFALL HIM.


AFTER THE SACRIFICE WHEN DAKSHA REACHED HIS ABODE, HE COULD HARDLY WAIT TO AVENGE HIS HUMILIATION.
I WILL HOLD THE GREATEST YAGNA EVER WITNESSED. BRAHMA AND VISHNU SHALL BE ESCORTED TO IT. I WILL INVITE ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE THREE WORLDS. BUT NOT MY UNCOUTH SON-IN-LAW AND THE UNGRATEFUL DAUGHTER WHO CHOSE HIM.


A FEW DAYS LATER—
WHERE ARE THEY GOING IN SUCH HASTE—AND DECKED IN THEIR FINEST ATTIRE?
I'LL FIND OUT.



WHEN SHE LEARNT THAT THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO DAKSHA'S GRAND YAGNA—

HOW STRANGE THAT MY MISTRESS AND THE LORD HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED!

SHE RETURNED TO SATI.

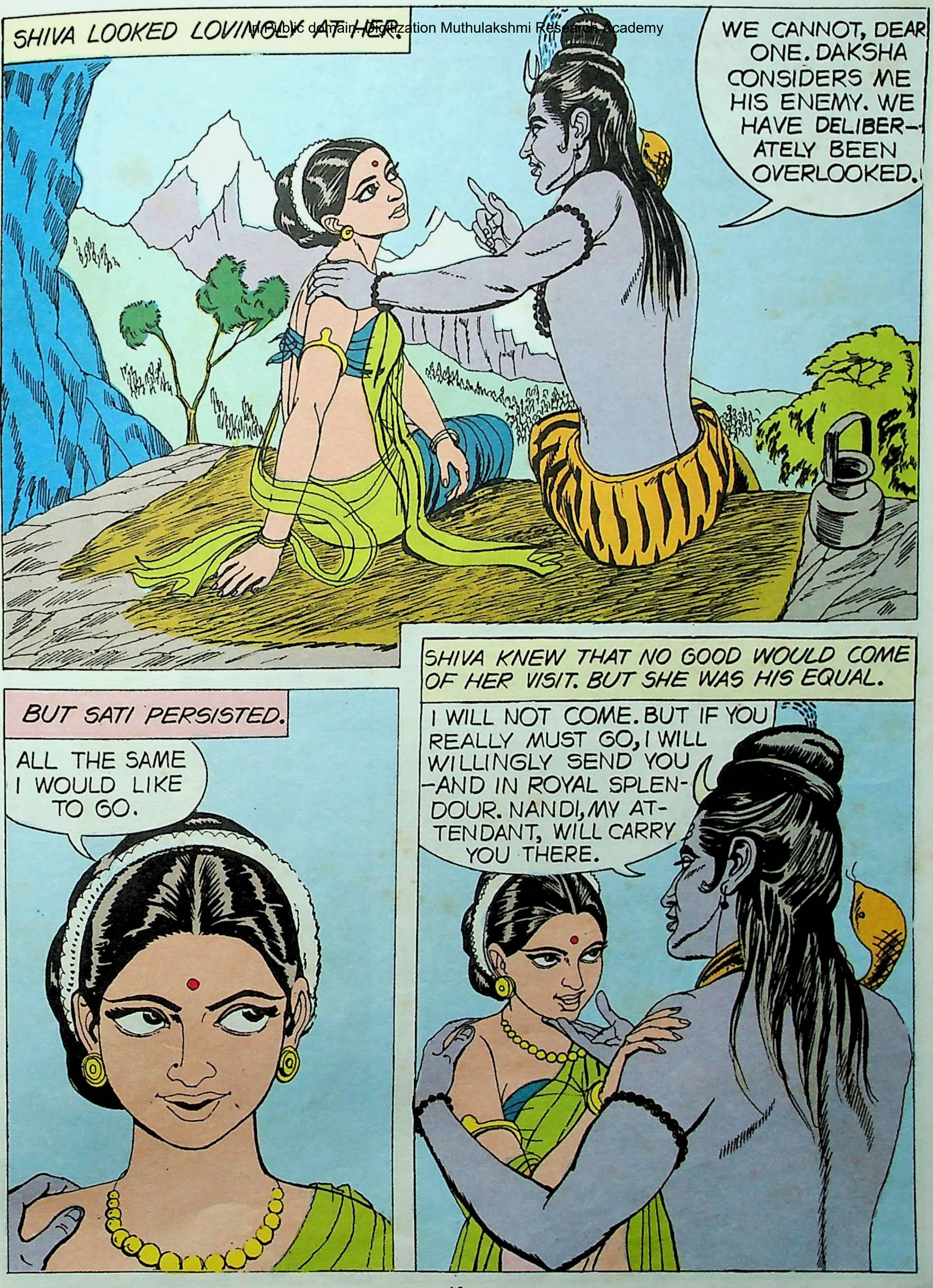
THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY TO A GRAND YAGNA, YOUR FATHER IS PERFORMING.
MY FATHER?

SATI WAS SURPRISED.

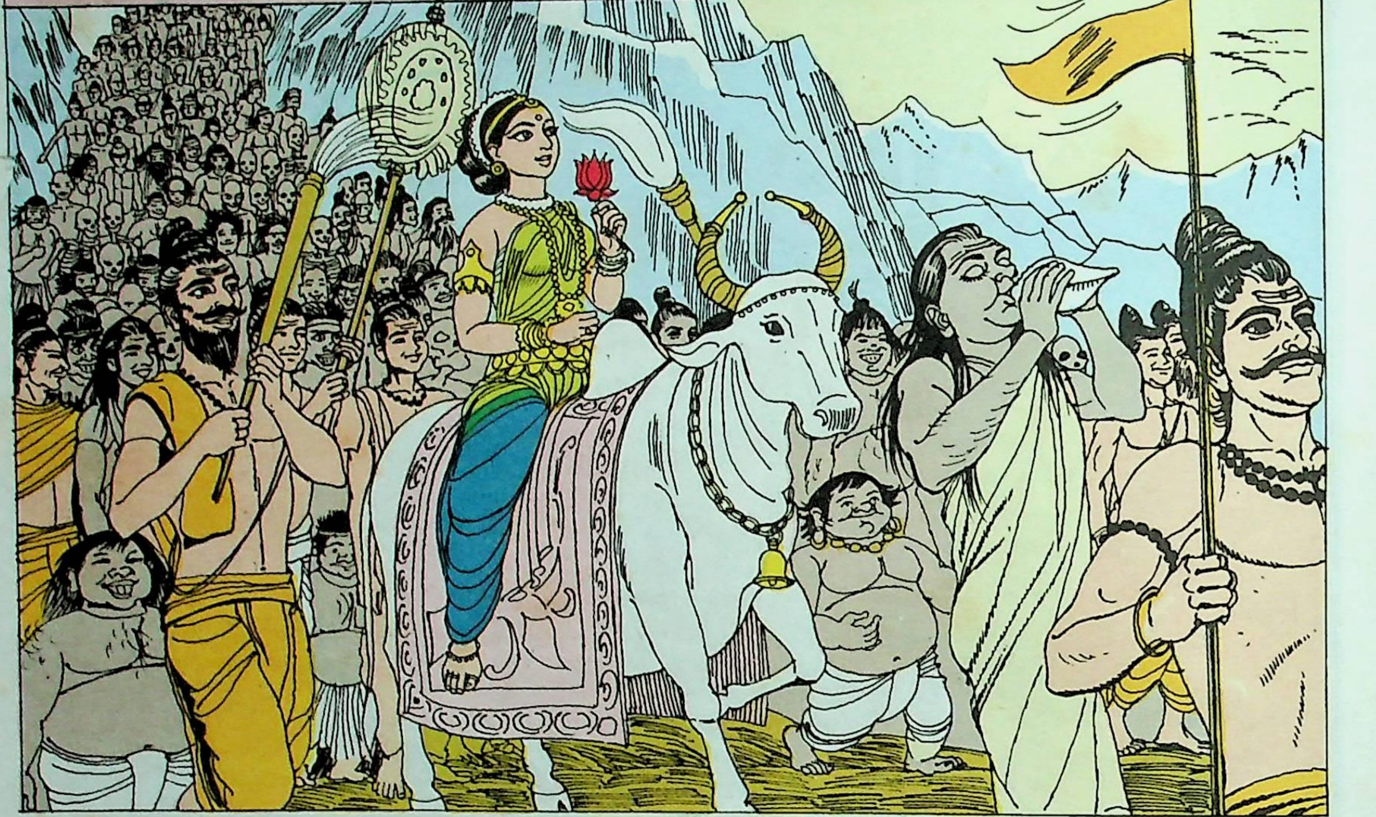
HOW COULD FATHER FORGET TO INVITE US?

SHE WENT TO SHIVA AND TOLD HIM ABOUT THE SACRIFICE.

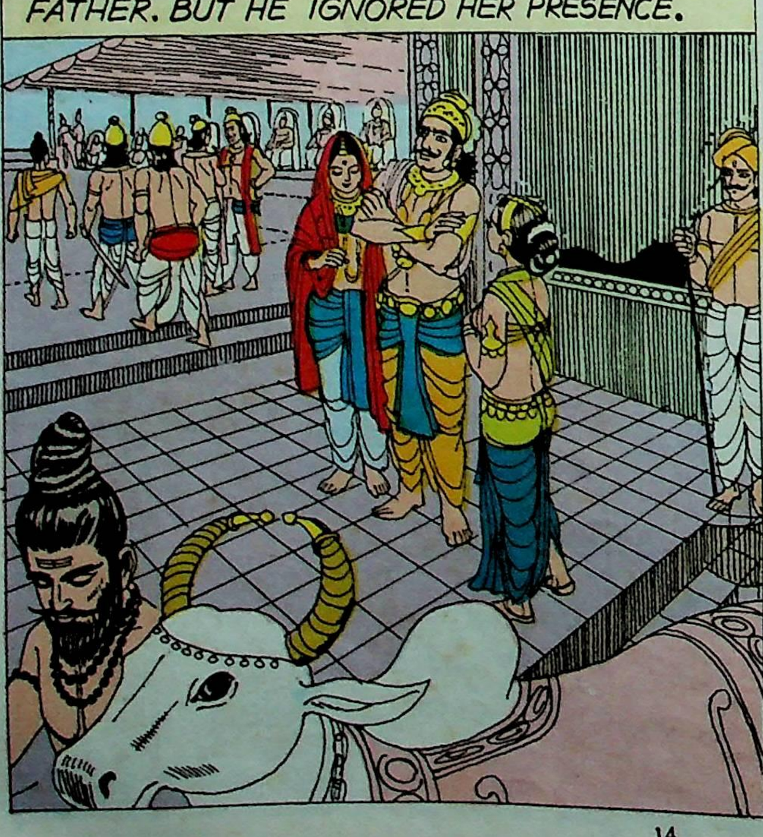
LET US GO TO MY FATHER'S SACRIFICIAL HALL.


SHIVA LOOKED LOVINGLY AT HER.
WE CANNOT, DEAR ONE. DAKSHA CONSIDERS ME HIS ENEMY. WE HAVE DELIBERATELY BEEN OVERLOOKED.
BUT SATI PERSISTED.
ALL THE SAME I WOULD LIKE TO GO.
SHIVA KNEW THAT NO GOOD WOULD COME OF HER VISIT. BUT SHE WAS HIS EQUAL.
I WILL NOT COME. BUT IF YOU REALLY MUST GO, I WILL WILLINGLY SEND YOU -AND IN ROYAL SPLENDOUR. NANDI, MY ATTENDANT, WILL CARRY YOU THERE.

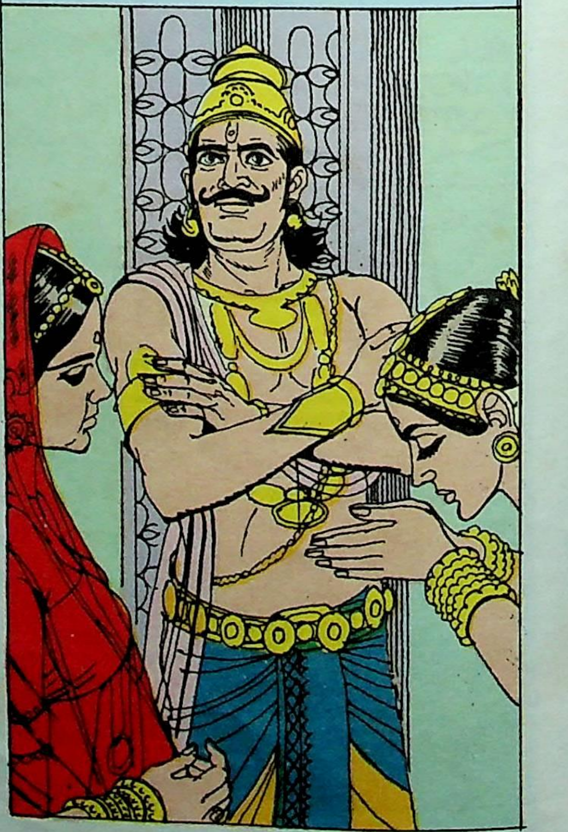
SO SATI SET OUT ON NANDI, SHIVA'S FAVOURITE ATTENDANT.

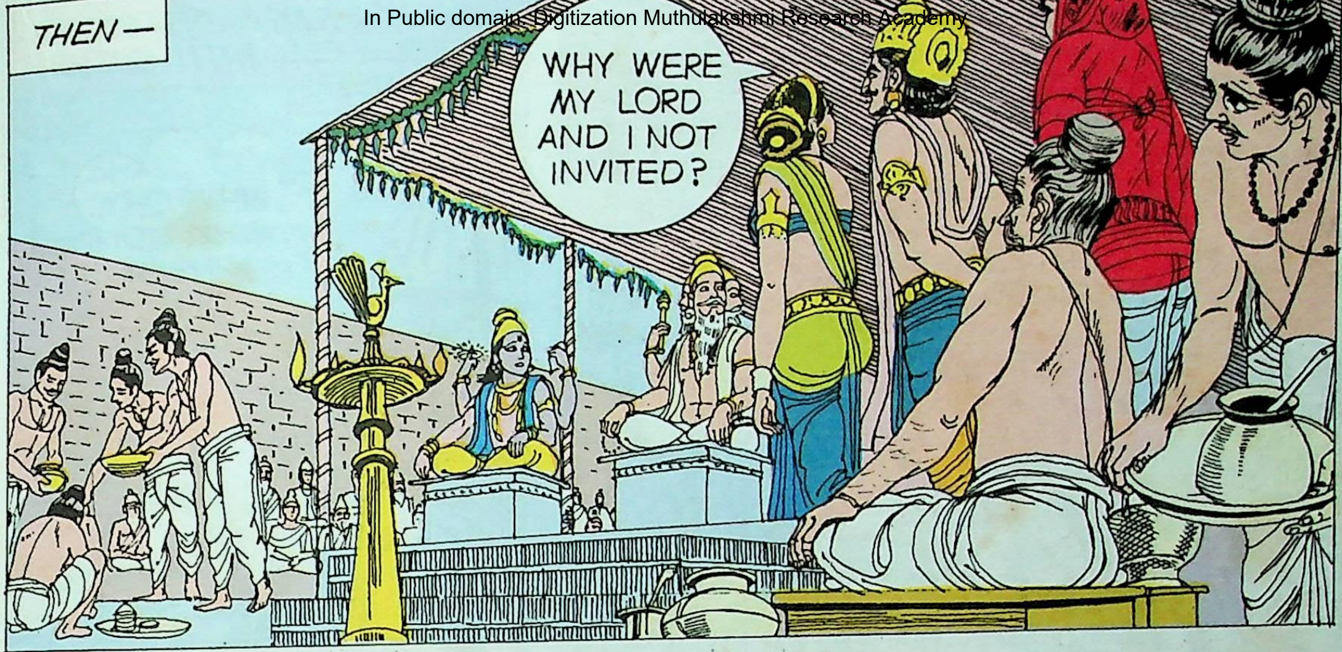


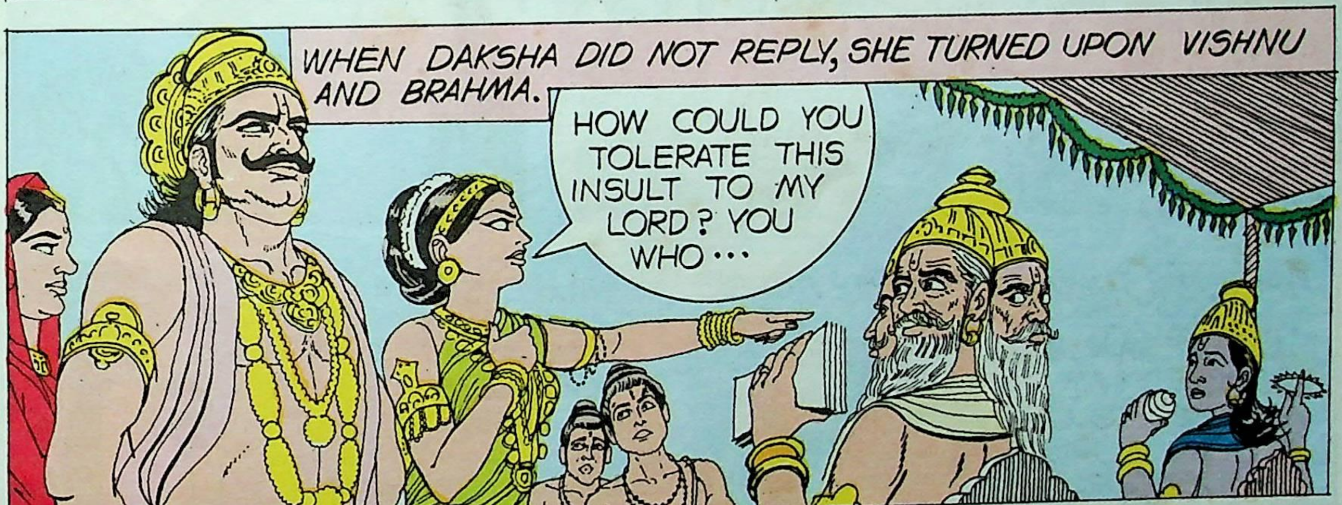
AT THE GATES OF DAKSHA'S ABODE, SATI DISMOUNTED AND WALKED UP TO HER FATHER. BUT HE IGNORED HER PRESENCE.

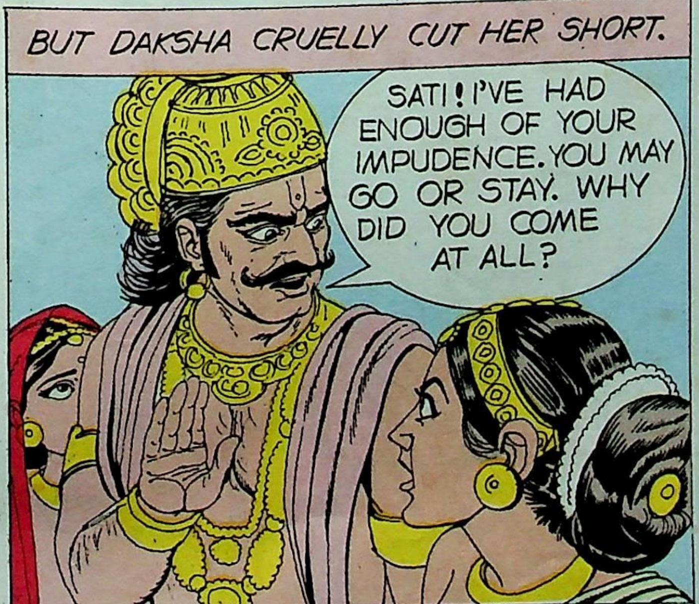


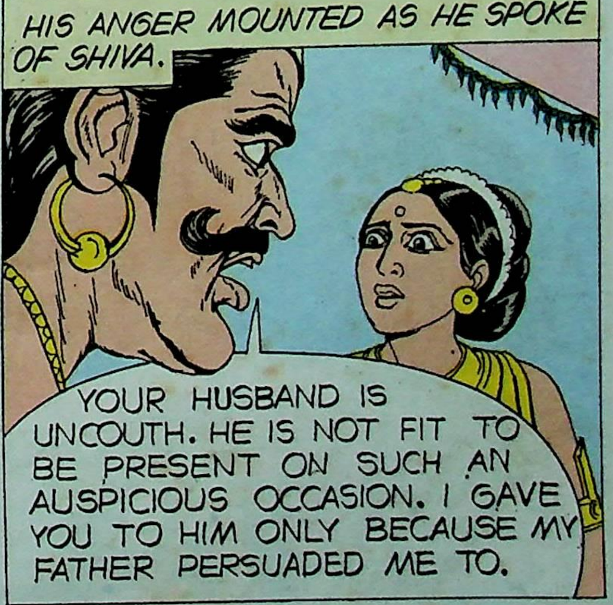
YET SATI, EVER DUTIFUL, BOWED TO HER PARENTS.

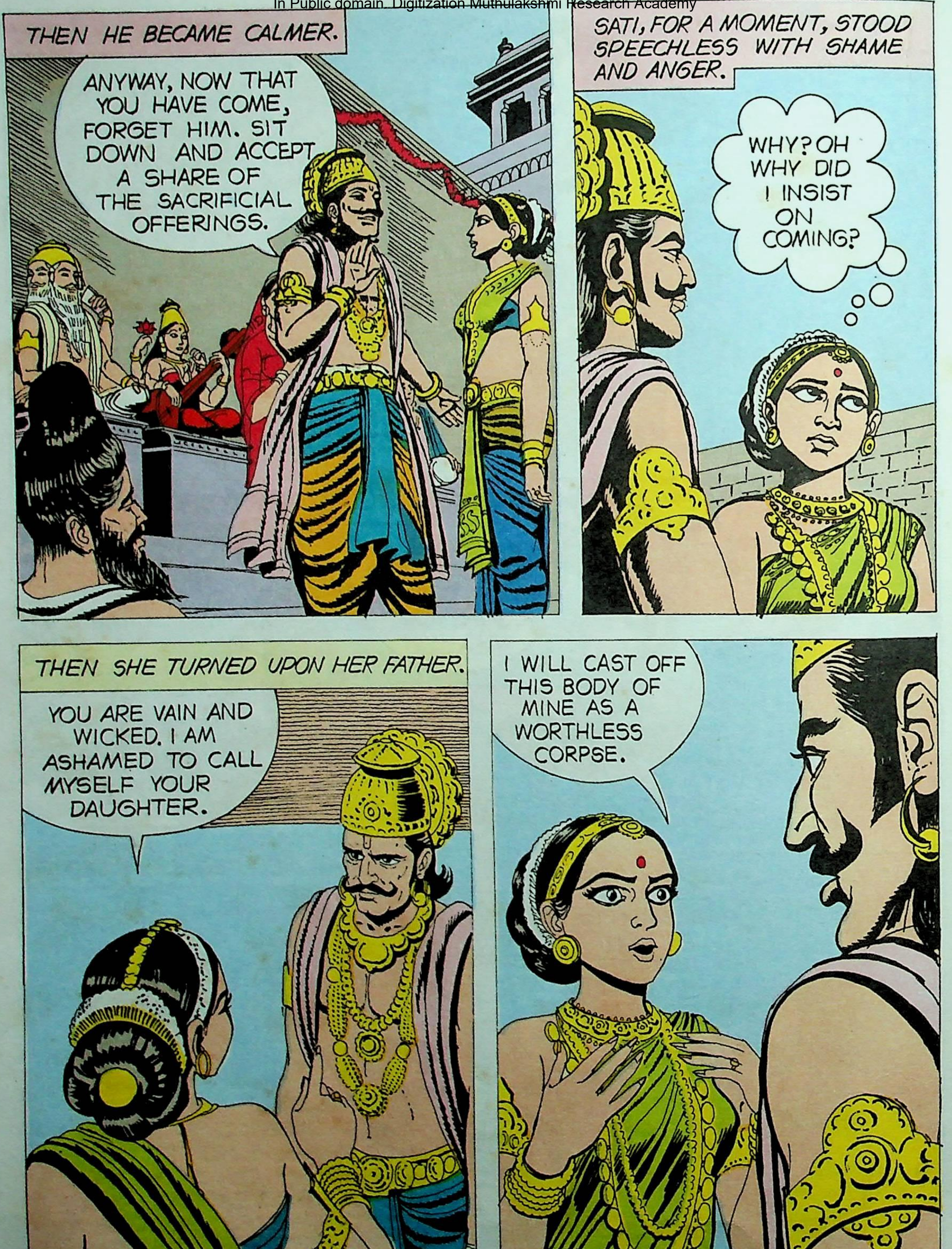


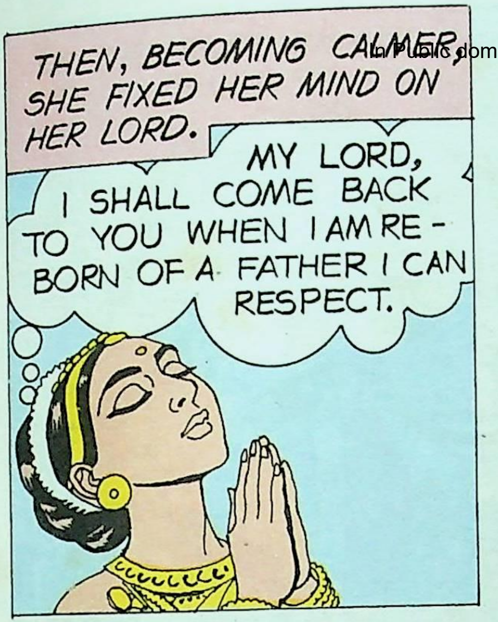

THEN—
WHY WERE MY LORD AND I NOT INVITED?

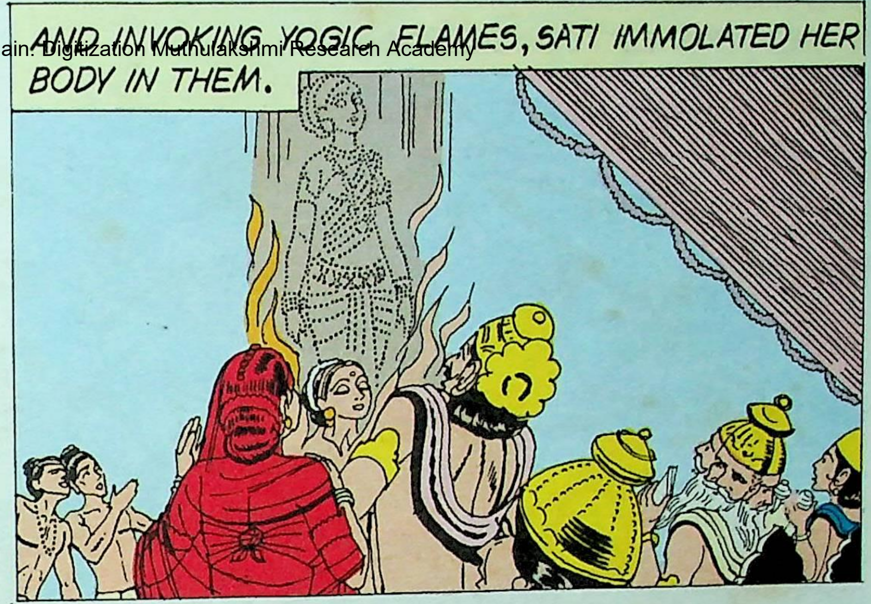

WHEN DAKSHA DID NOT REPLY, SHE TURNED UPON VISHNU AND BRAHMA.
HOW COULD YOU TOLERATE THIS INSULT TO MY LORD? YOU WHO···

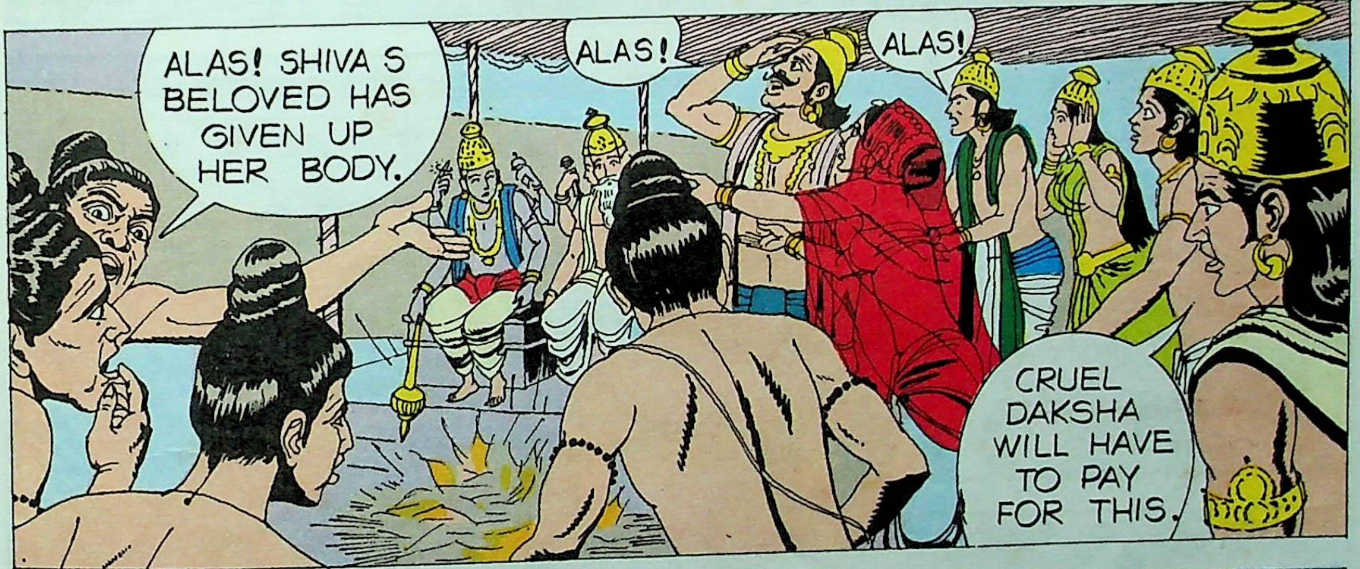

BUT DAKSHA CRUELLY CUT HER SHORT.
SATI! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR IMPUDENCE. YOU MAY GO OR STAY. WHY DID YOU COME AT ALL?

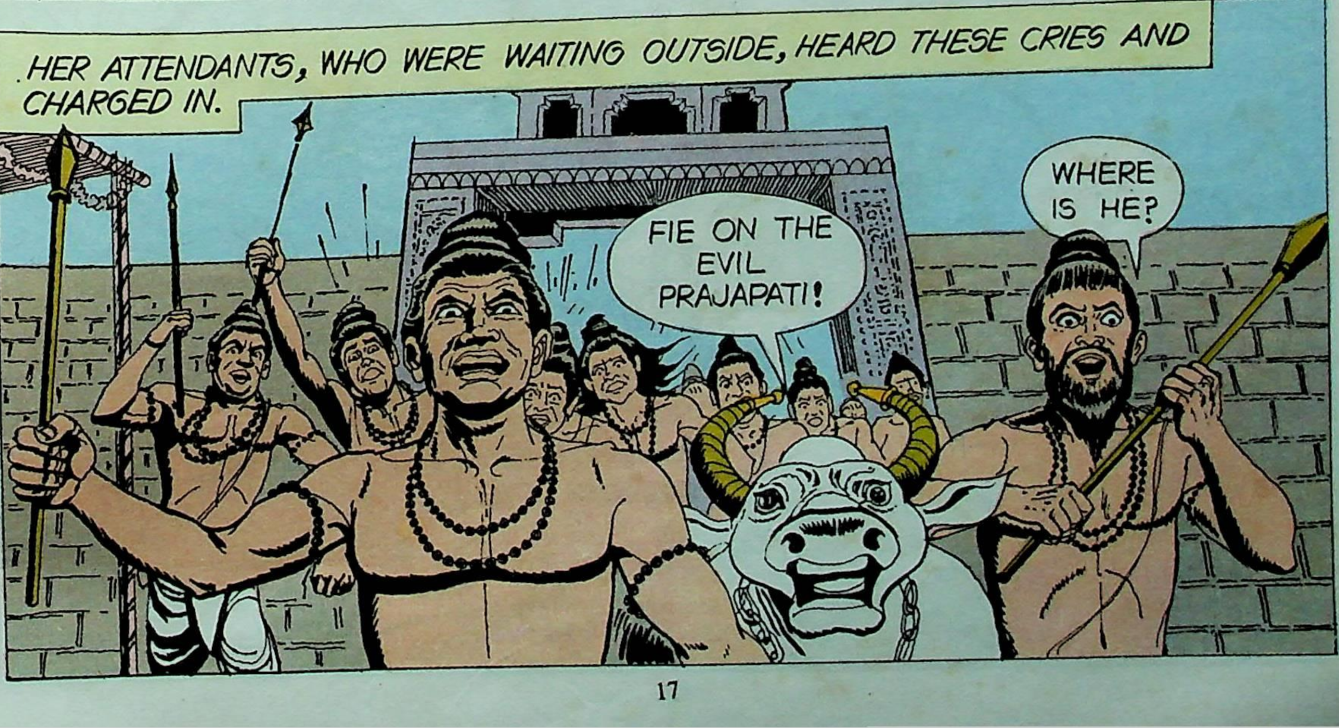

HIS ANGER MOUNTED AS HE SPOKE OF SHIVA.
YOUR HUSBAND IS UNCOUTH. HE IS NOT FIT TO BE PRESENT ON SUCH AN AUSPICIOUS OCCASION. I GAVE YOU TO HIM ONLY BECAUSE MY FATHER PERSUADED ME TO.

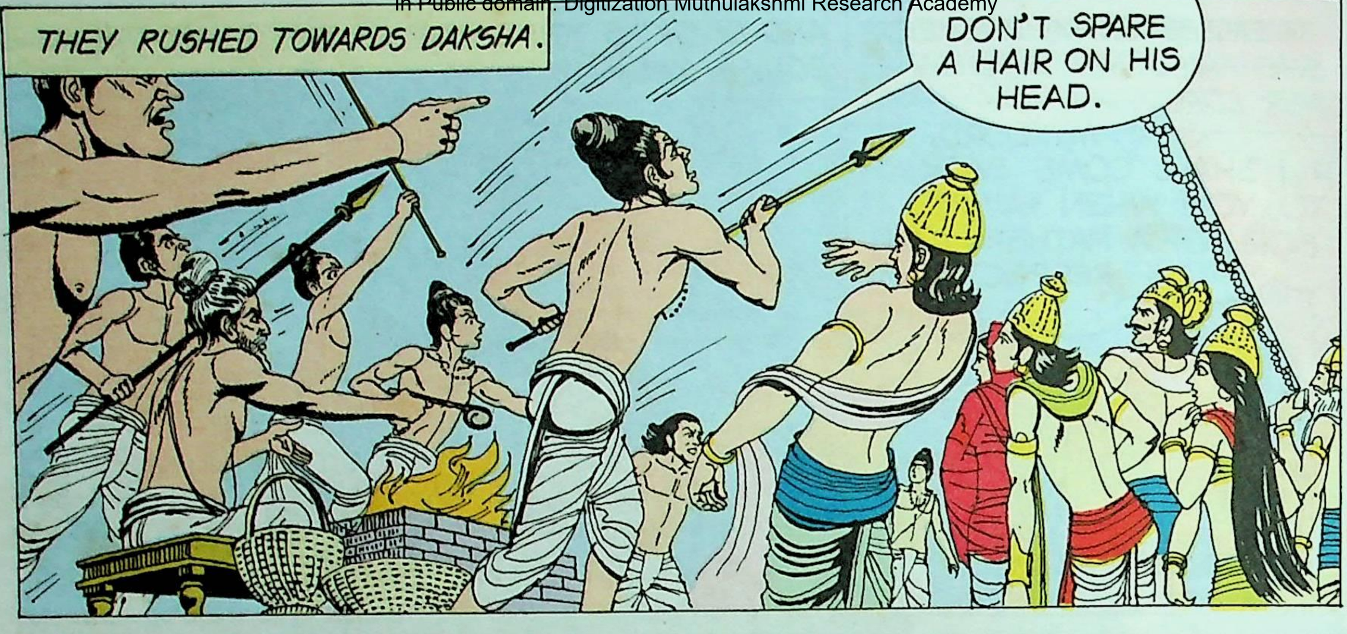

THEN HE BECAME CALMER.
ANYWAY, NOW THAT YOU HAVE COME, FORGET HIM. SIT DOWN AND ACCEPT A SHARE OF THE SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS.
SATI, FOR A MOMENT, STOOD SPEECHLESS WITH SHAME AND ANGER.
WHY? OH WHY DID I INSIST ON COMING?
THEN SHE TURNED UPON HER FATHER.
YOU ARE VAIN AND WICKED. I AM ASHAMED TO CALL MYSELF YOUR DAUGHTER.
I WILL CAST OFF THIS BODY OF MINE AS A WORTHLESS CORPSE.

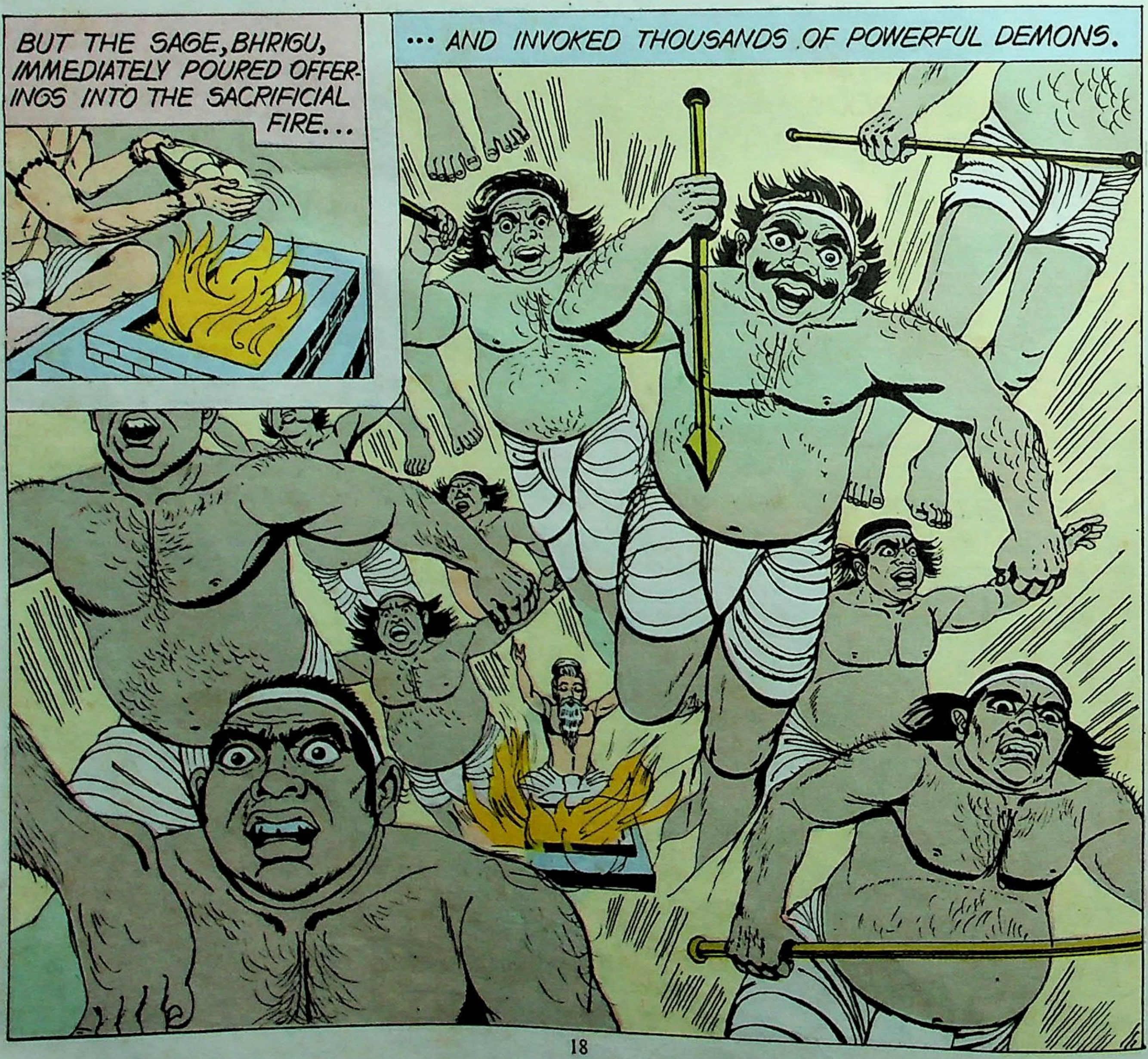

THEN, BECOMING CALMER, SHE FIXED HER MIND ON HER LORD.
MY LORD, I SHALL COME BACK TO YOU WHEN I AM RE-BORN OF A FATHER I CAN RESPECT.

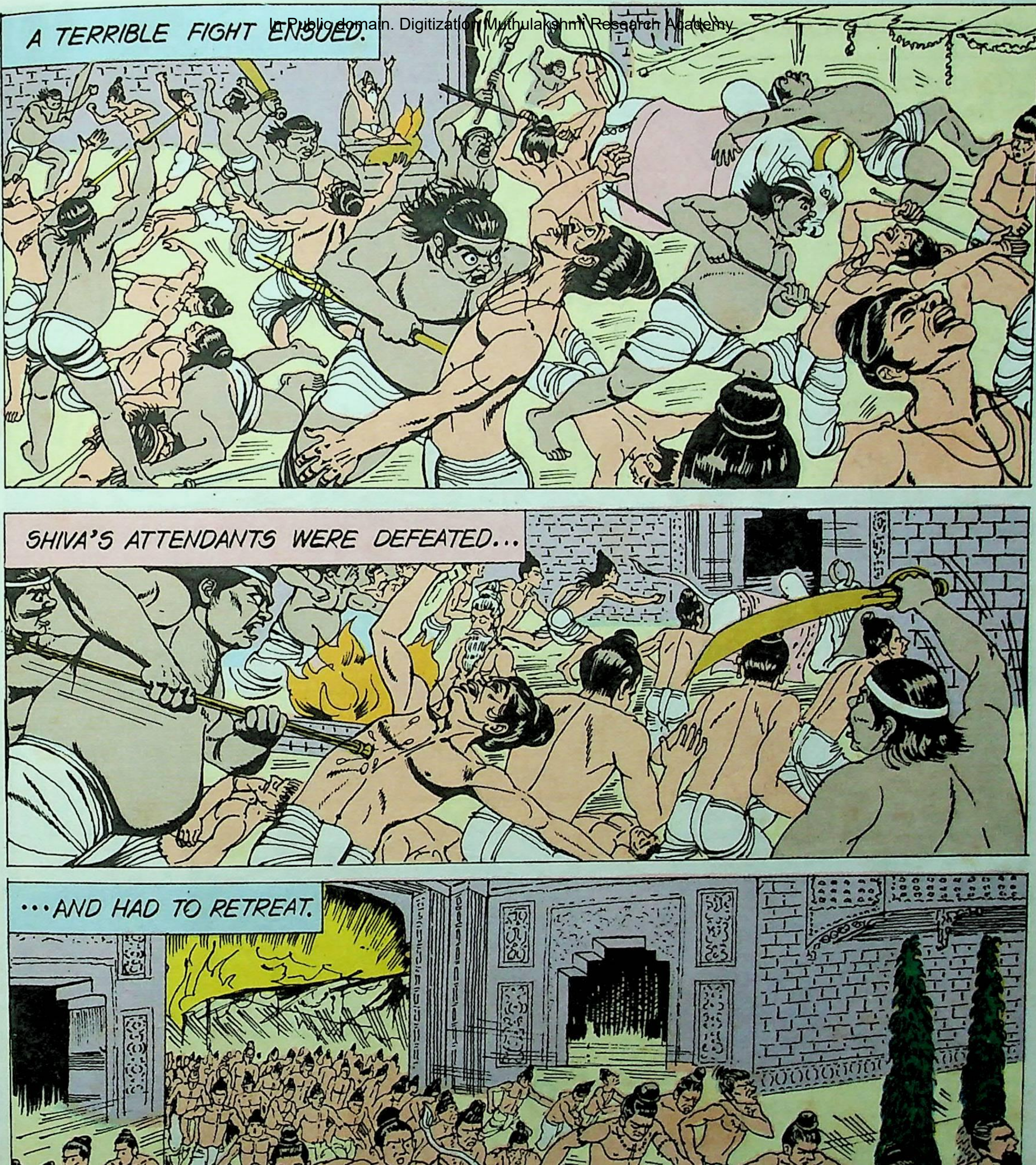

AND INVOKING YOGIC FLAMES, SATI IMMOLATED HER BODY IN THEM.

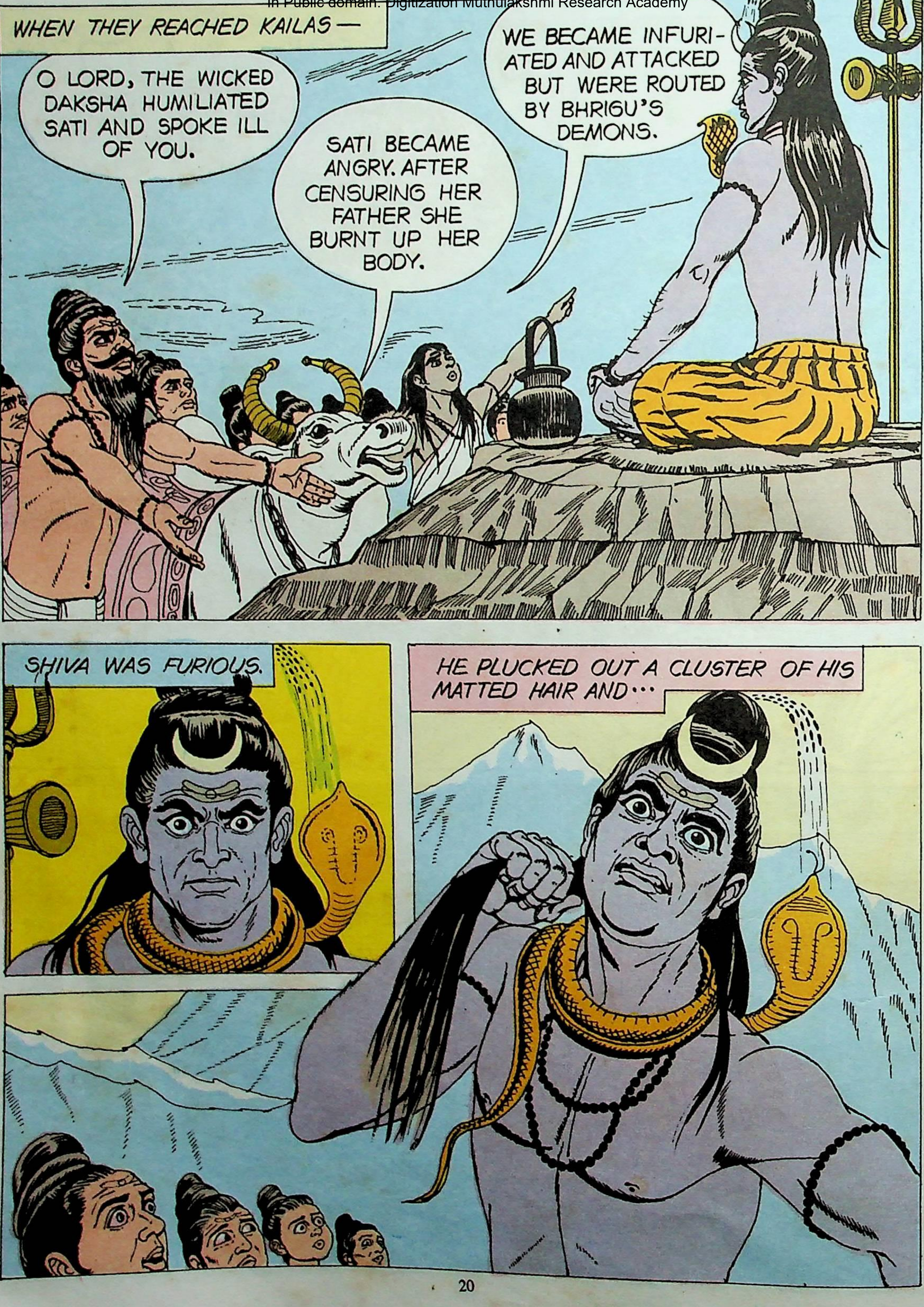

ALAS! SHIVA S BELOVED HAS GIVEN UP HER BODY.
ALAS!
ALAS!
CRUEL DAKSHA WILL HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS.

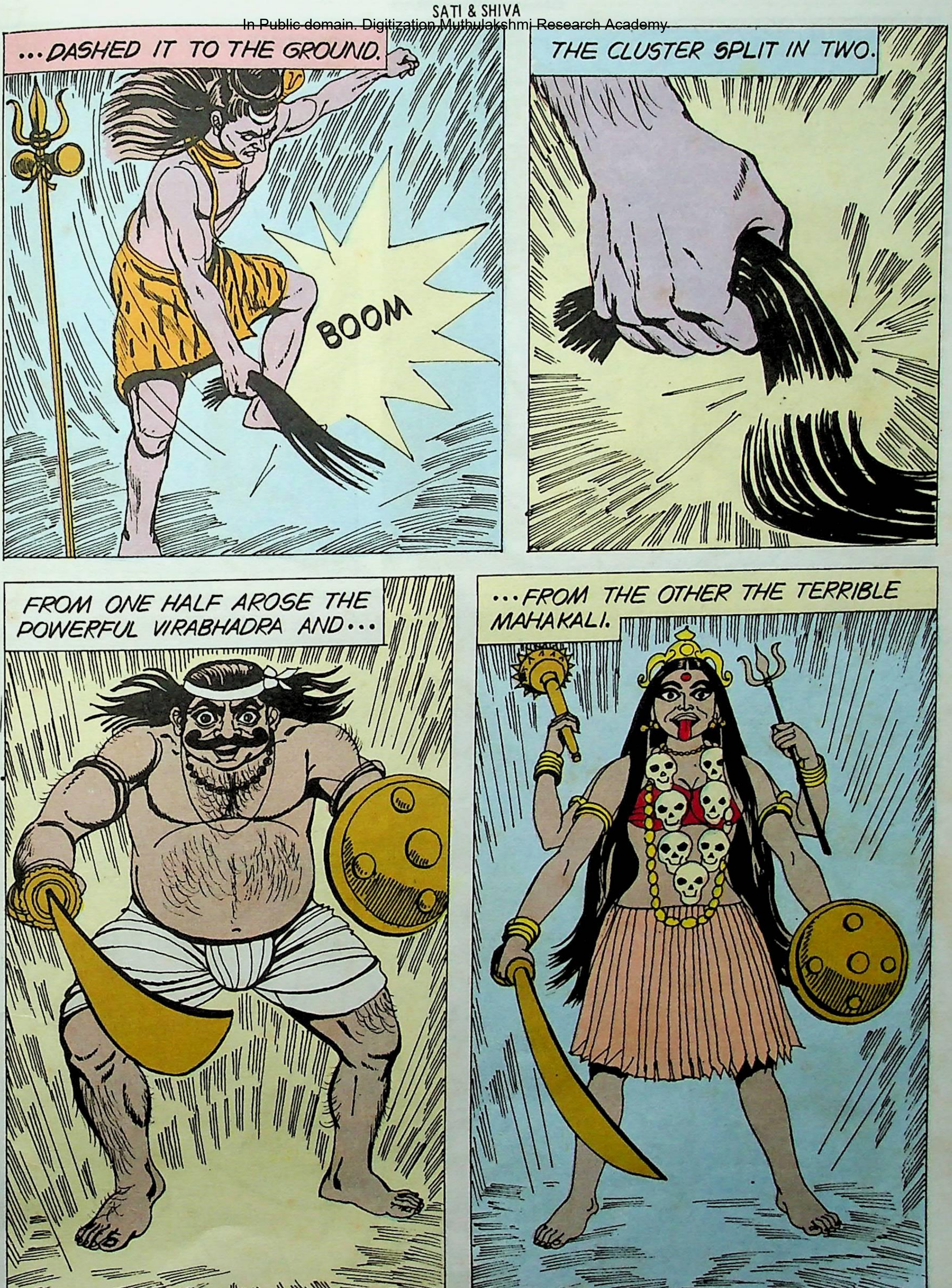

HER ATTENDANTS, WHO WERE WAITING OUTSIDE, HEARD THESE CRIES AND CHARGED IN.
FIE ON THE EVIL PRAJAPATI!
WHERE IS HE?

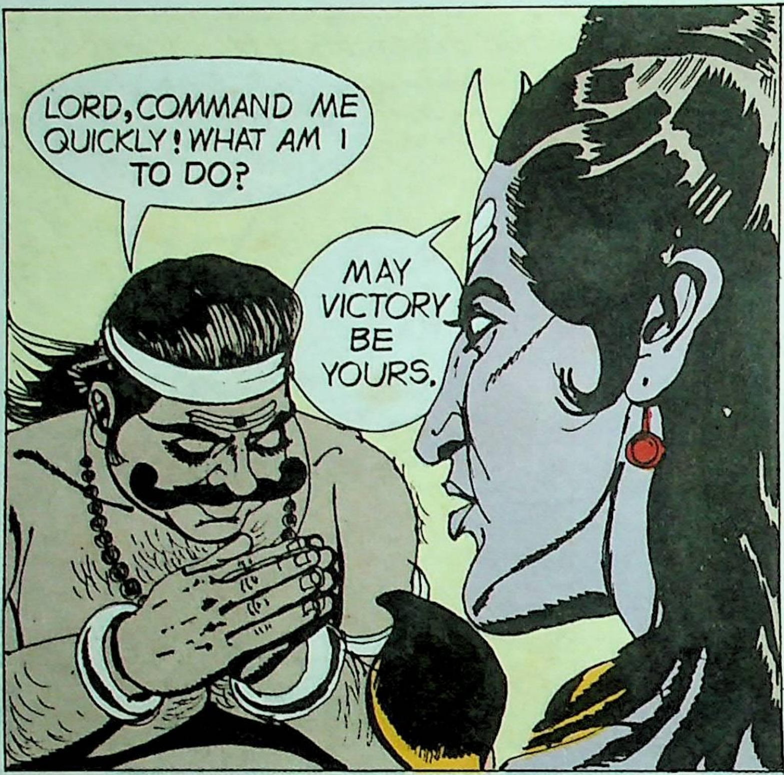

THEY RUSHED TOWARDS DAKSHA.
DON'T SPARE A HAIR ON HIS HEAD.

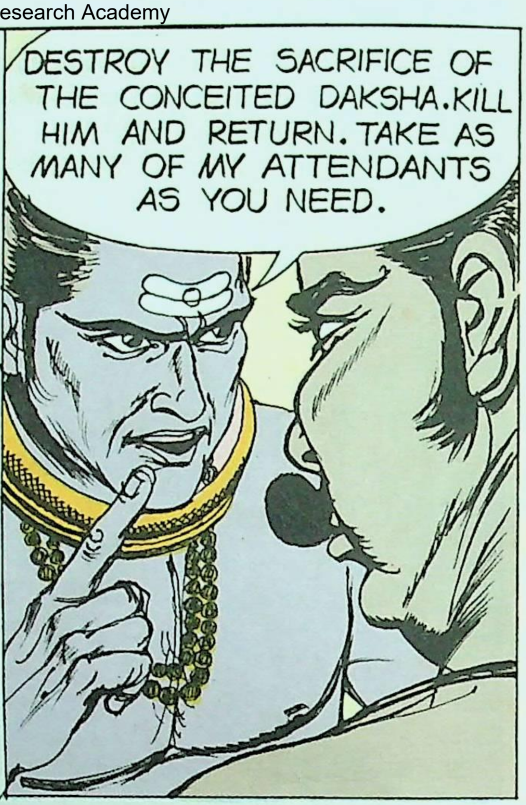

BUT THE SAGE, BHRIGU, IMMEDIATELY POURED OFFERINGS INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE...
... AND INVOKED THOUSANDS OF POWERFUL DEMONS.

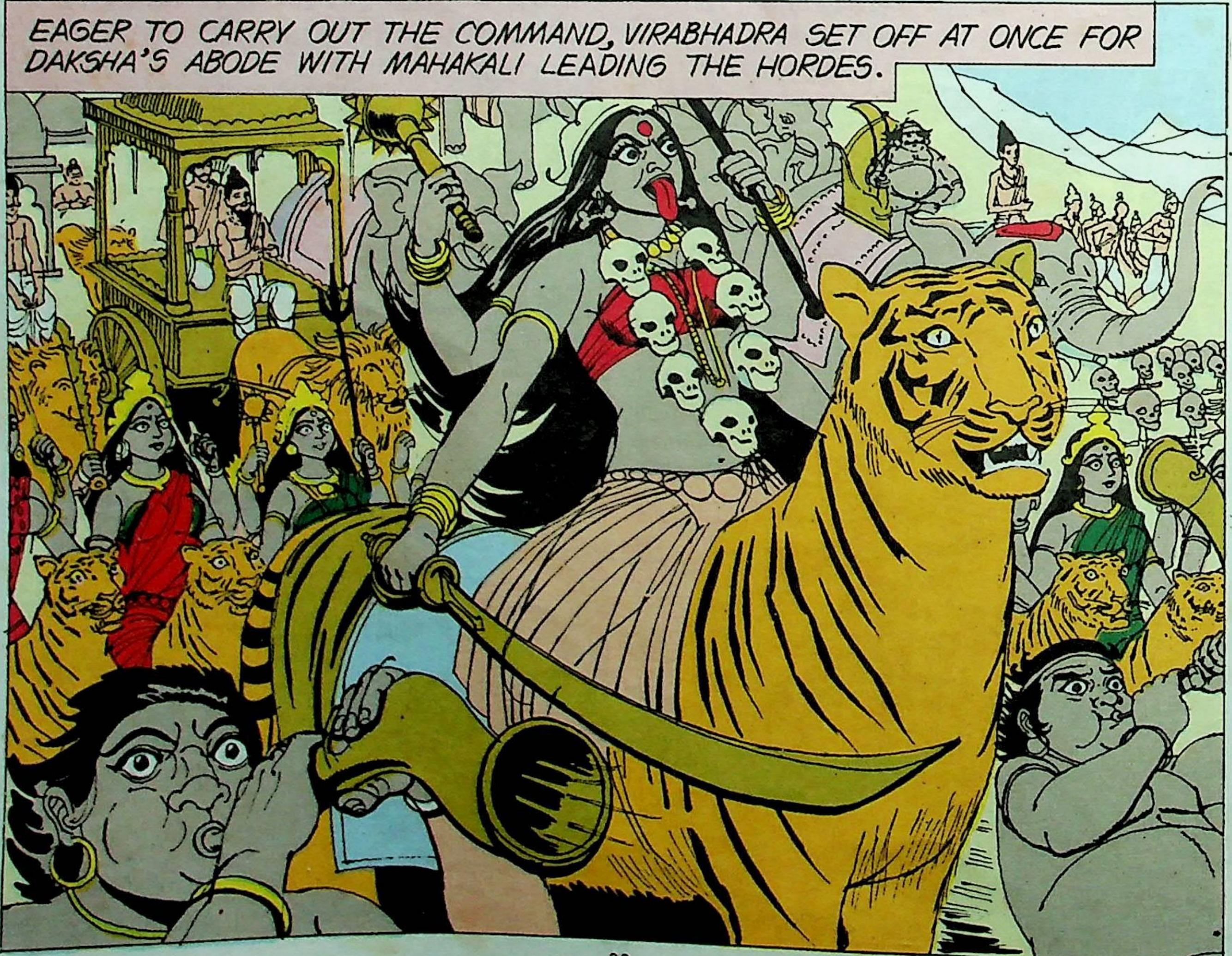

A TERRIBLE FIGHT ENSUED.
SHIVA'S ATTENDANTS WERE DEFEATED...
...AND HAD TO RETREAT.


WHEN THEY REACHED KAILAS —
O LORD, THE WICKED DAKSHA HUMILIATED SATI AND SPOKE ILL OF YOU.
SATI BECAME ANGRY. AFTER CENSURING HER FATHER SHE BURNT UP HER BODY.
WE BECAME INFURIATED AND ATTACKED BUT WERE ROUTED BY BHRIGU'S DEMONS.
SHIVA WAS FURIOUS.
HE PLUCKED OUT A CLUSTER OF HIS MATTED HAIR AND…

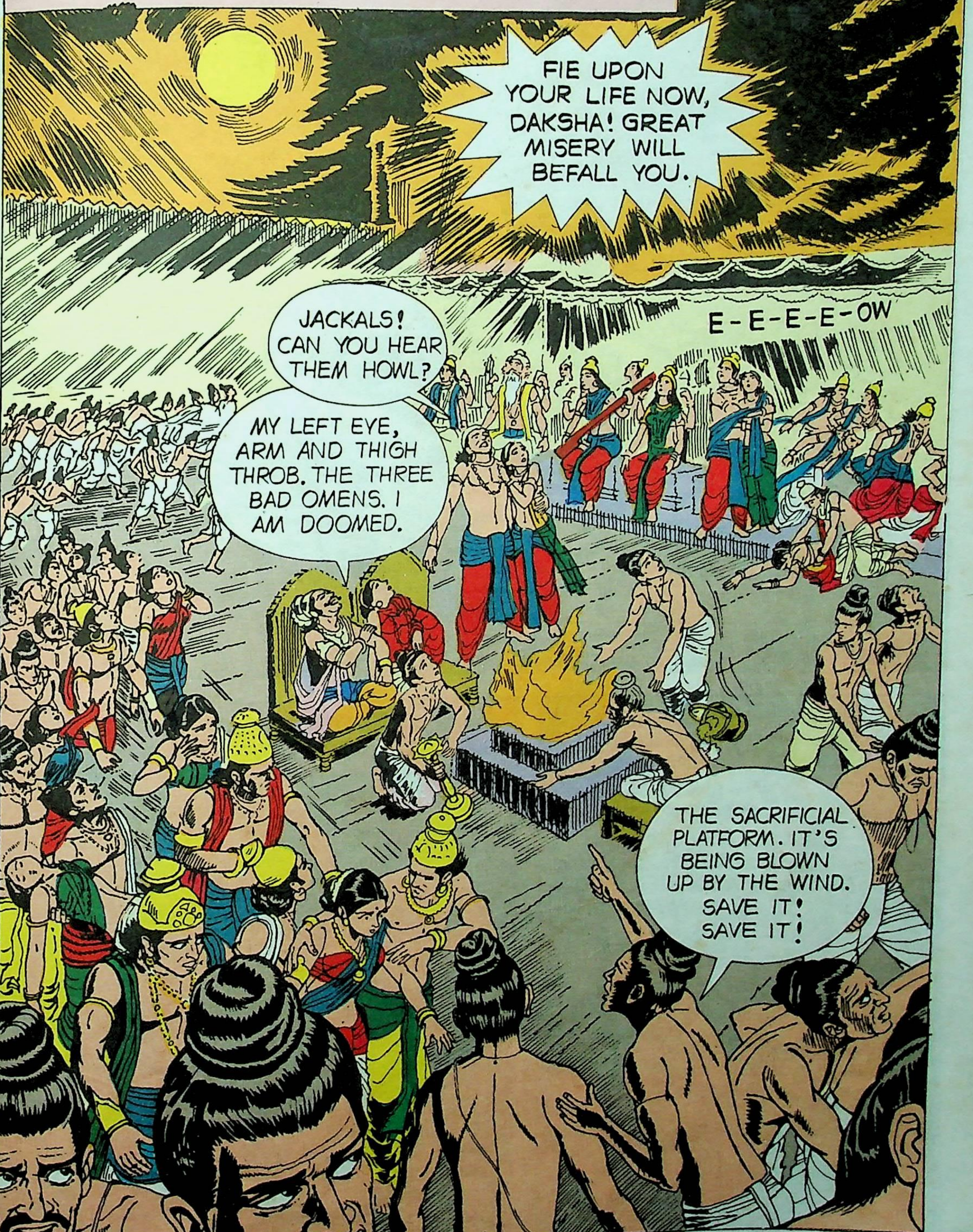

...DASHED IT TO THE GROUND.
BOOM
THE CLUSTER SPLIT IN TWO.
FROM ONE HALF AROSE THE POWERFUL VIRABHADRA AND...
...FROM THE OTHER THE TERRIBLE MAHAKALI.


LORD, COMMAND ME QUICKLY! WHAT AM I TO DO?
MAY VICTORY BE YOURS.

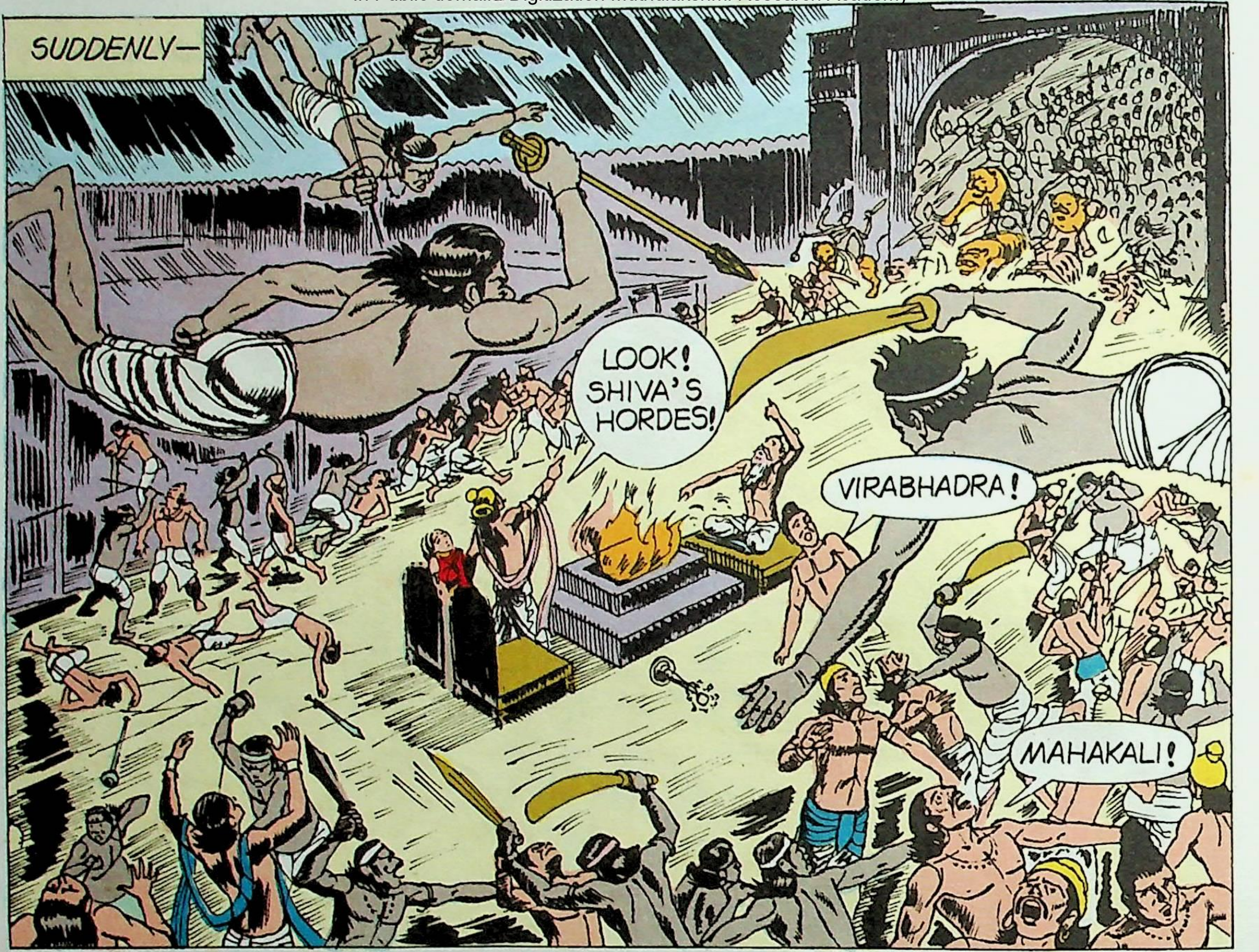

DESTROY THE SACRIFICE OF THE CONCEITED DAKSHA. KILL HIM AND RETURN. TAKE AS MANY OF MY ATTENDANTS AS YOU NEED.


EAGER TO CARRY OUT THE COMMAND, VIRABHADRA SET OFF AT ONCE FOR DAKSHA'S ABODE WITH MAHAKALI LEADING THE HORDES.

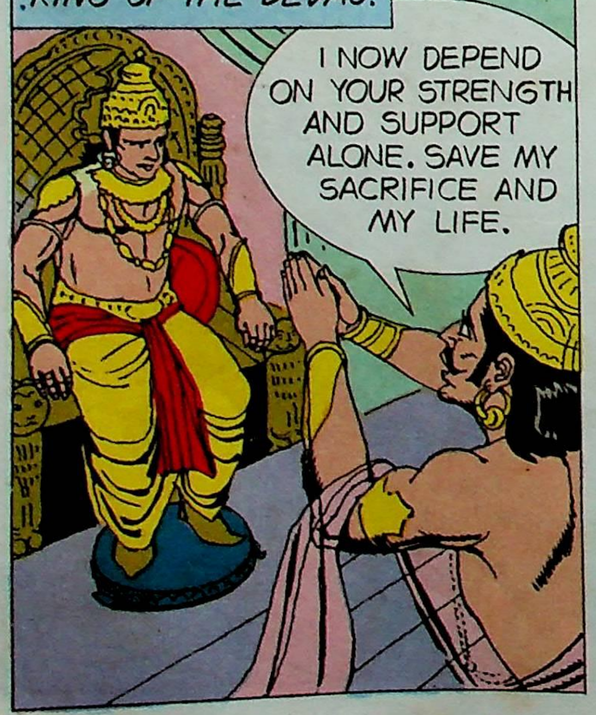
WHILE VIRABHADRA ADVANCED, A NUMBER OF BAD OMENS WERE SEEN BY DAKSHA AND HIS GUESTS. A CELESTIAL VOICE CURSED DAKSHA.


FIE UPON YOUR LIFE NOW, DAKSHA! GREAT MISERY WILL BEFALL YOU.
JACKALS! CAN YOU HEAR THEM HOWL?
E-E-E-E-OW
MY LEFT EYE, ARM AND THIGH THROB. THE THREE BAD OMENS. I AM DOOMED.
THE SACRIFICIAL PLATFORM. IT'S BEING BLOWN UP BY THE WIND. SAVE IT! SAVE IT!

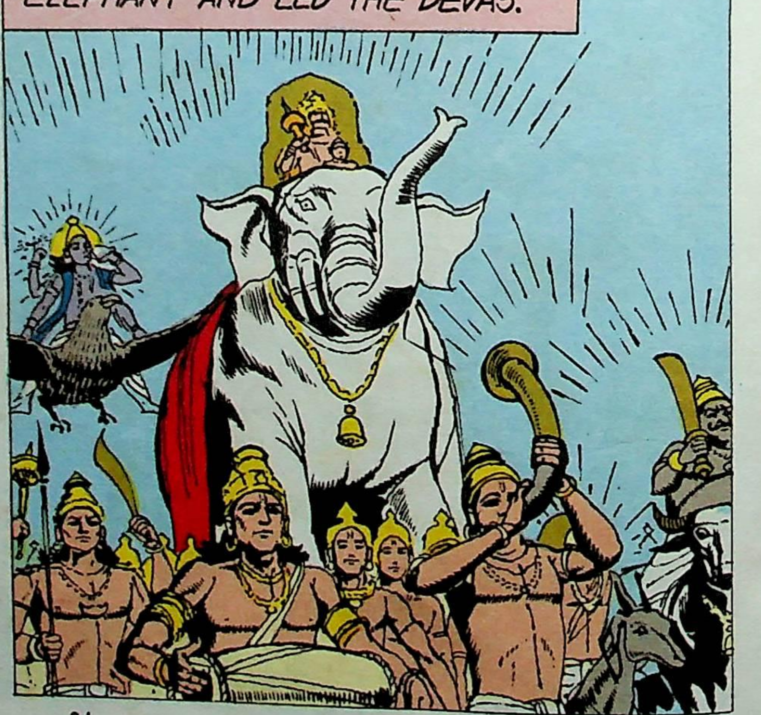
SUDDENLY—

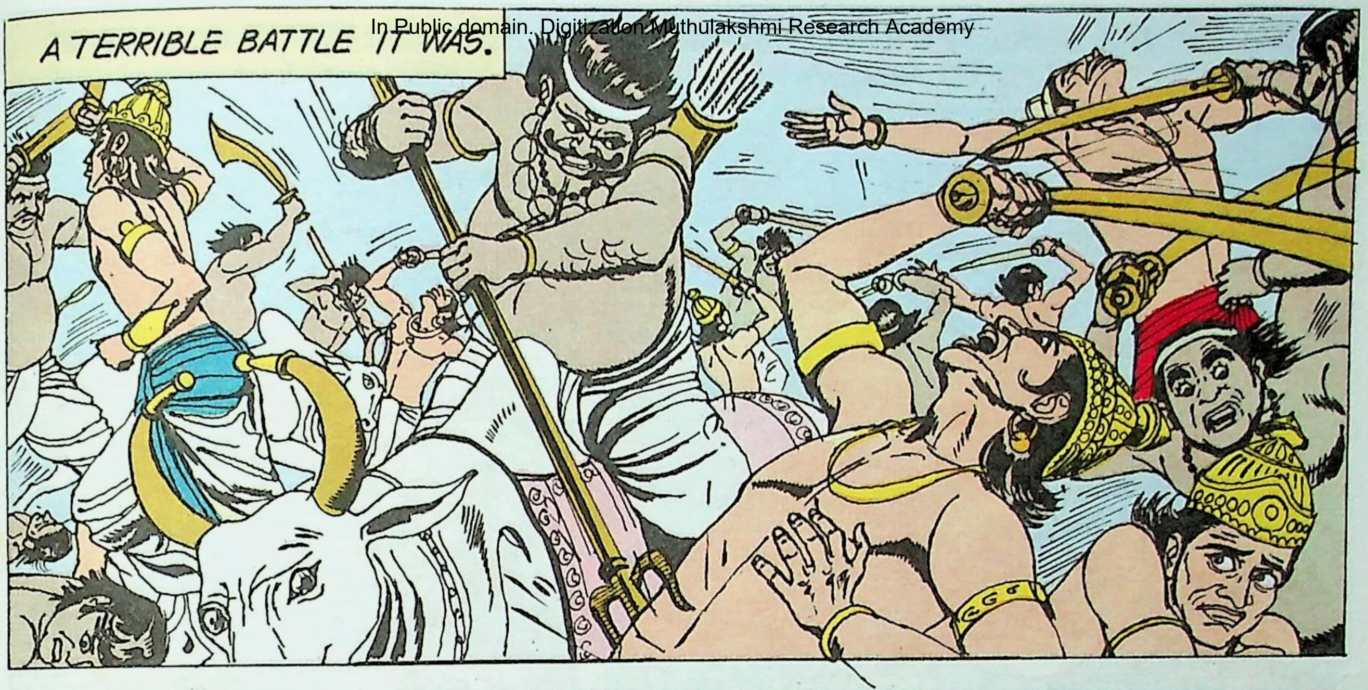

LOOK! SHIVA'S HORDES!
VIRABHADRA!
MAHAKALI!

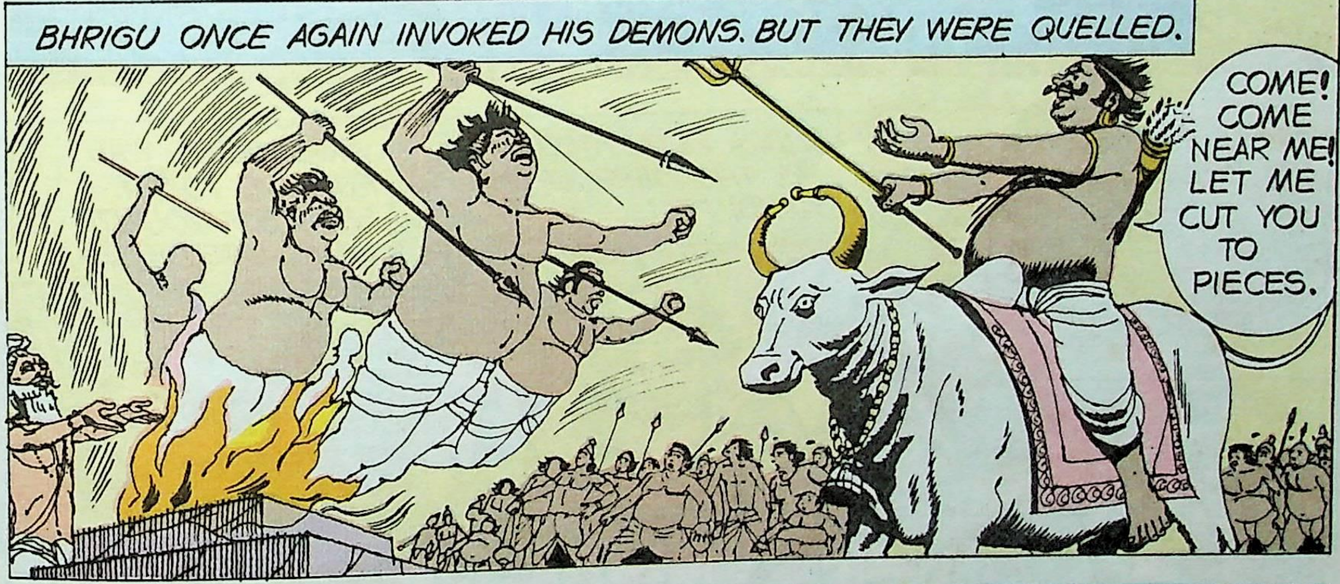
DAKSHA APPEALED TO INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

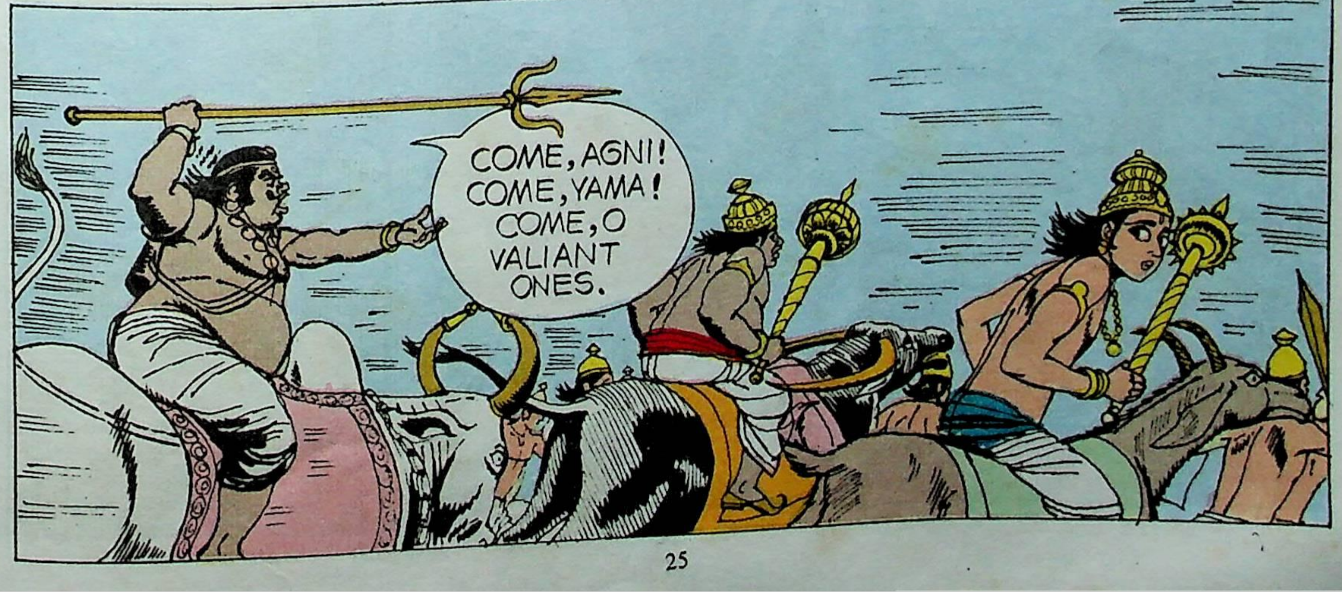

I NOW DEPEND ON YOUR STRENGTH AND SUPPORT ALONE. SAVE MY SACRIFICE AND MY LIFE.

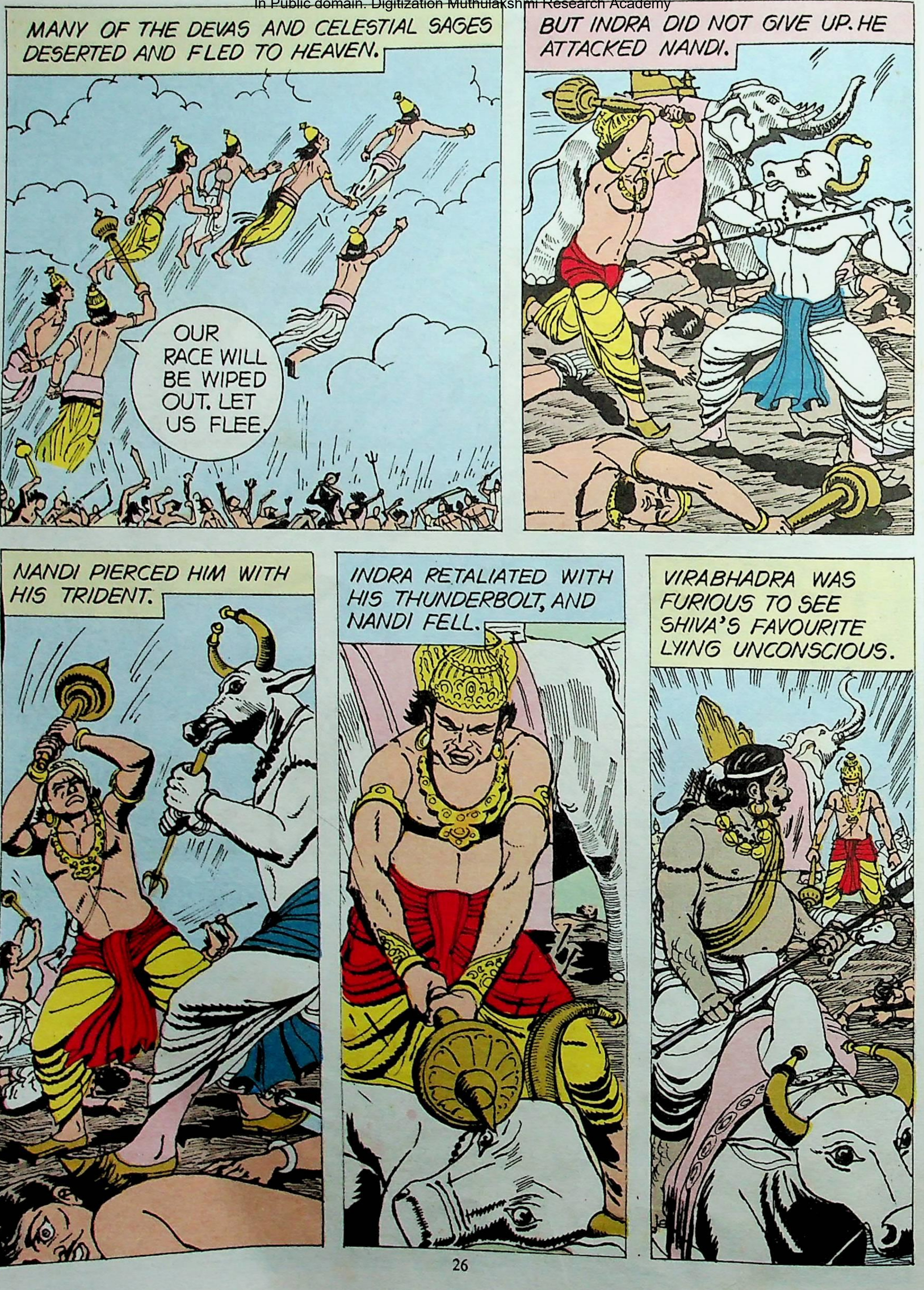
INDRA IMMEDIATELY MOUNTED HIS ELEPHANT AND LED THE DEVAS.

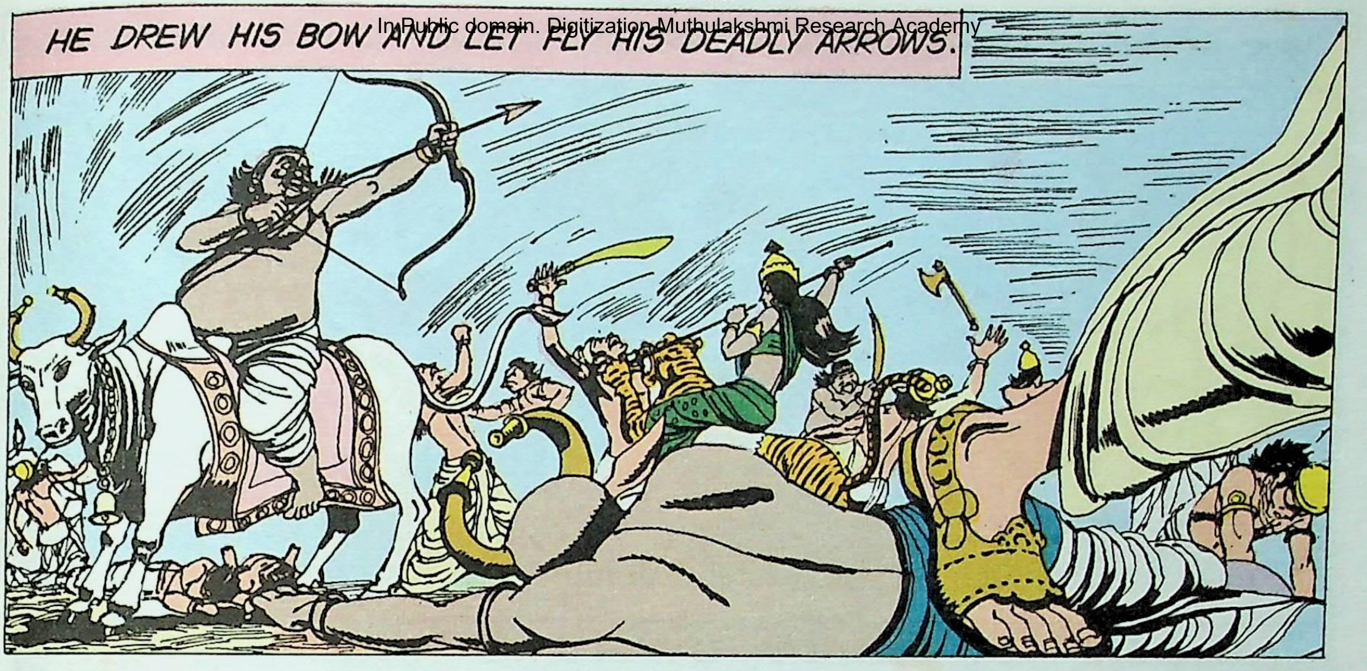


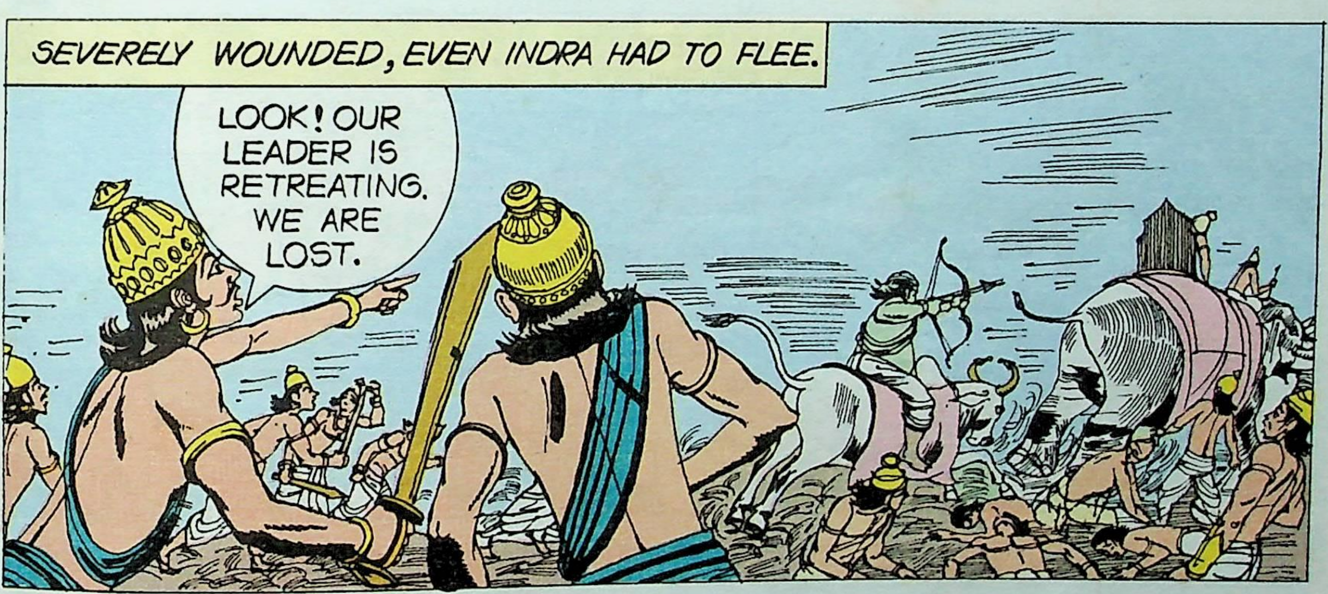

A TERRIBLE BATTLE IT WAS.

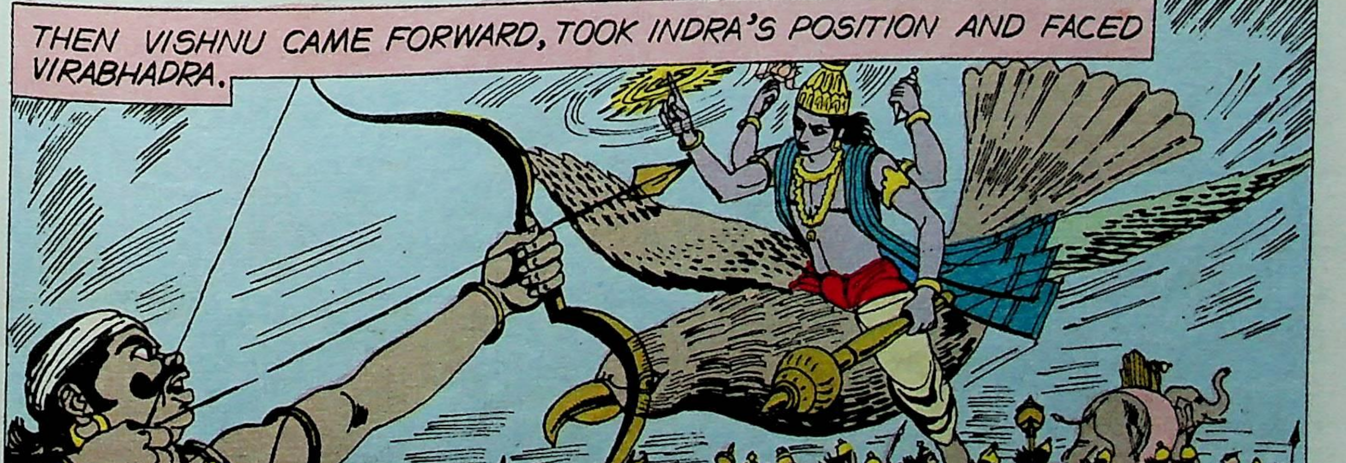

BHRIGU ONCE AGAIN INVOKED HIS DEMONS. BUT THEY WERE QUELLED.
COME! COME NEAR ME! LET ME CUT YOU TO PIECES.


COME, AGNI! COME, YAMA! COME, O VALIANT ONES.

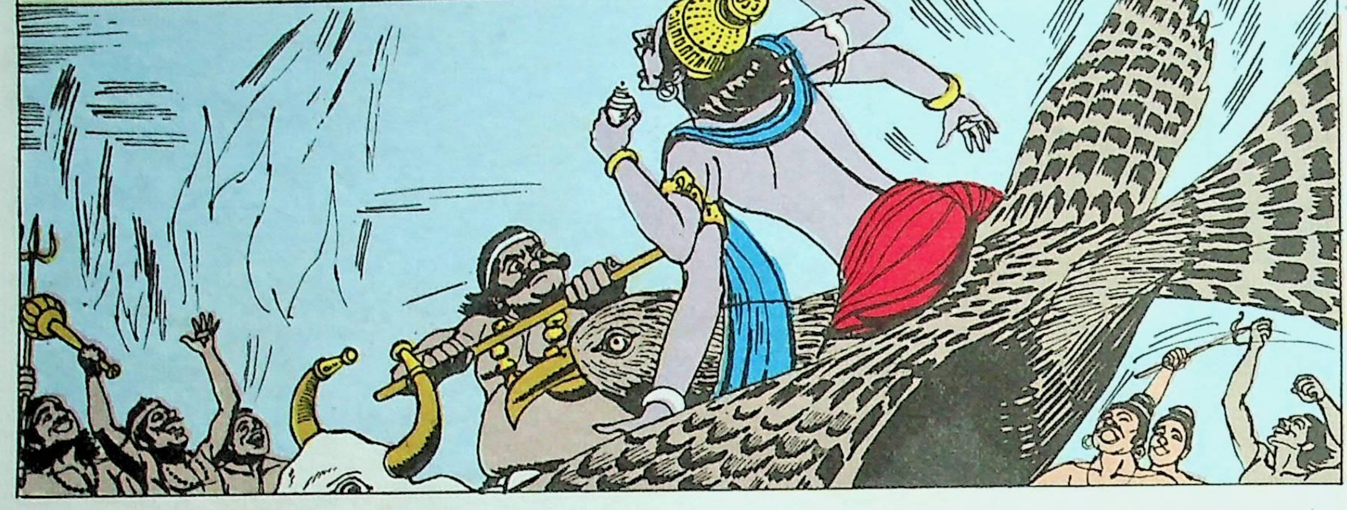

MANY OF THE DEVAS AND CELESTIAL SAGES DESERTED AND FLED TO HEAVEN.
OUR RACE WILL BE WIPED OUT. LET US FLEE.
BUT INDRA DID NOT GIVE UP. HE ATTACKED NANDI.
NANDI PIERCED HIM WITH HIS TRIDENT.
INDRA RETALIATED WITH HIS THUNDERBOLT, AND NANDI FELL.
VIRABHADRA WAS FURIOUS TO SEE SHIVA'S FAVOURITE LYING UNCONSCIOUS.


HE DREW HIS BOW AND LET FLY HIS DEADLY ARROWS.

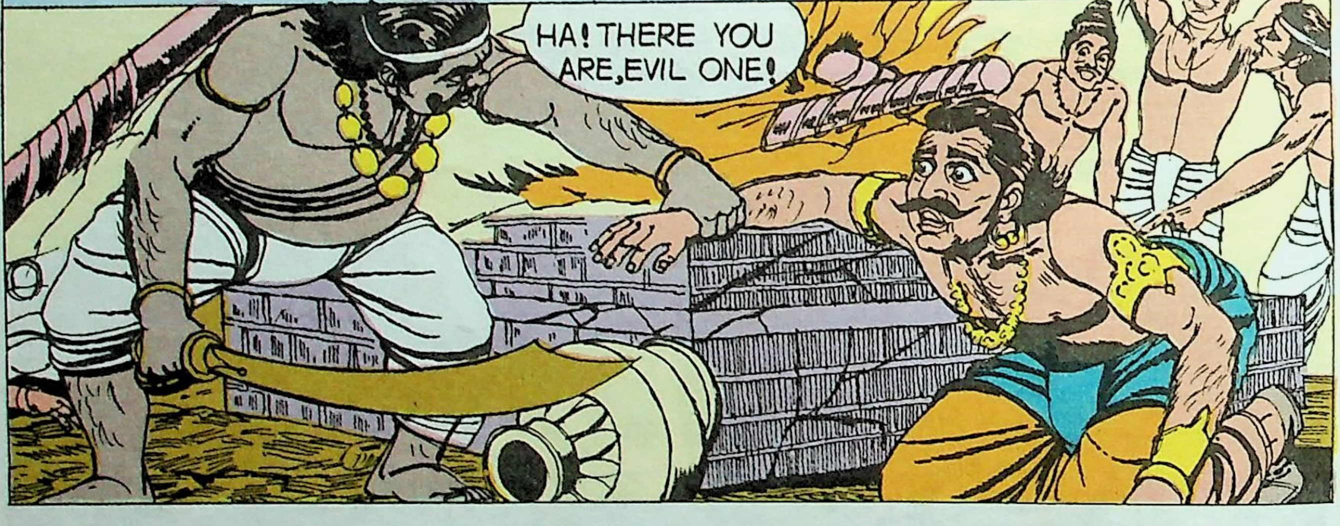

SEVERELY WOUNDED, EVEN INDRA HAD TO FLEE.
LOOK! OUR LEADER IS RETREATING. WE ARE LOST.


THEN VISHNU CAME FORWARD, TOOK INDRA'S POSITION AND FACED VIRABHADRA.

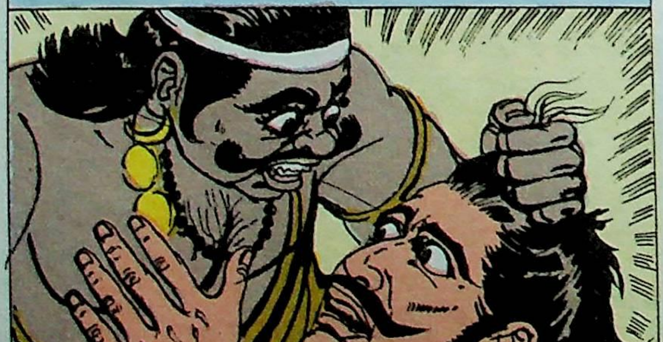
BUT VIRABHADRA CHARGED WITH HIS TRIDENT AND VISHNU FELL UNCONSCIOUS.



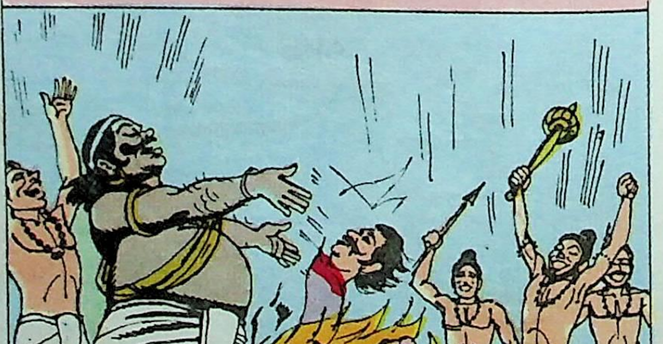
LEAVING HIM THERE, VIRABHADRA WENT IN SEARCH OF DAKSHA.

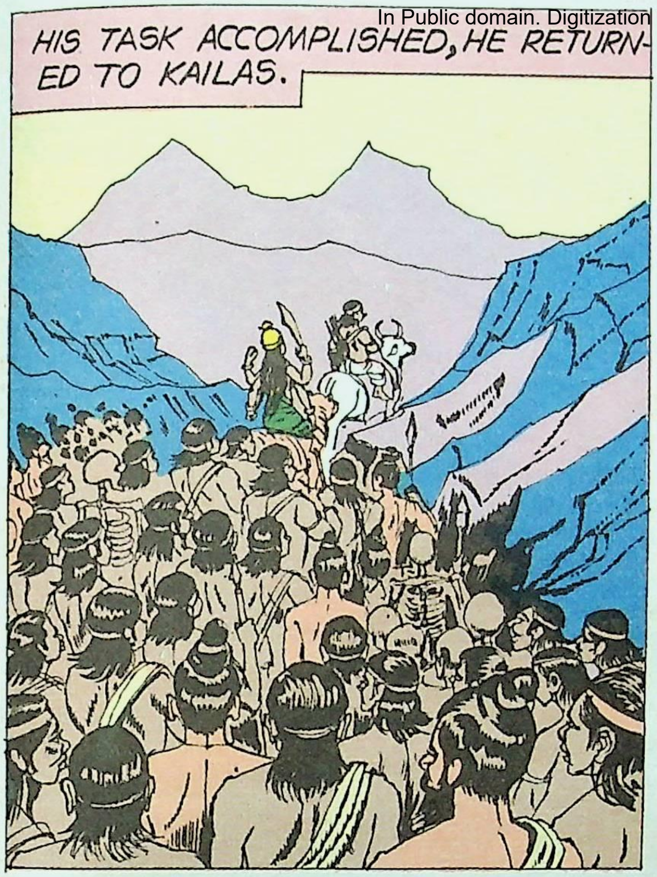

HA! THERE YOU ARE, EVIL ONE!

HE TORE OFF DAKSHA'S HEAD AND...

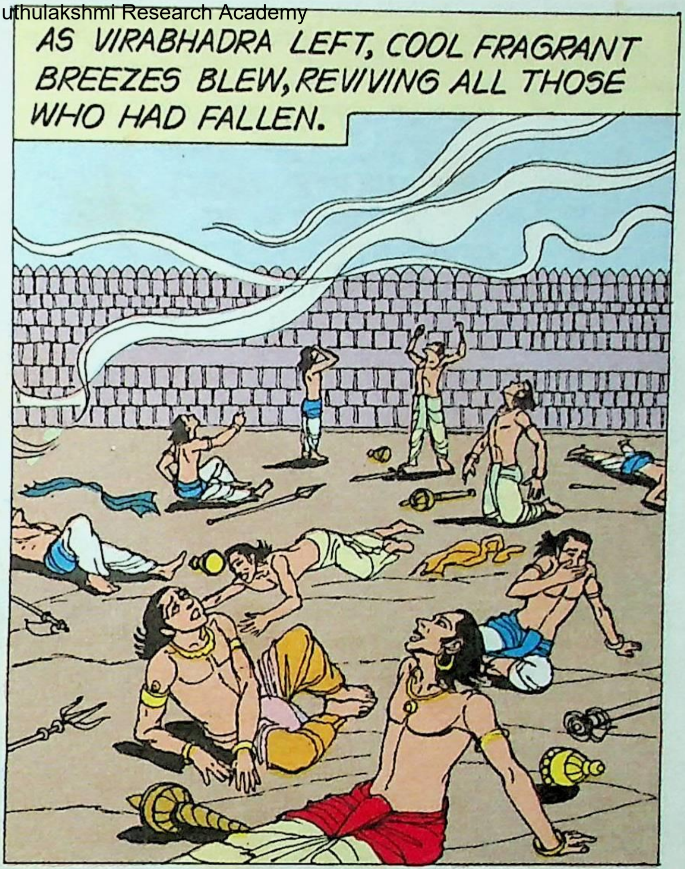


...THREW IT INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.

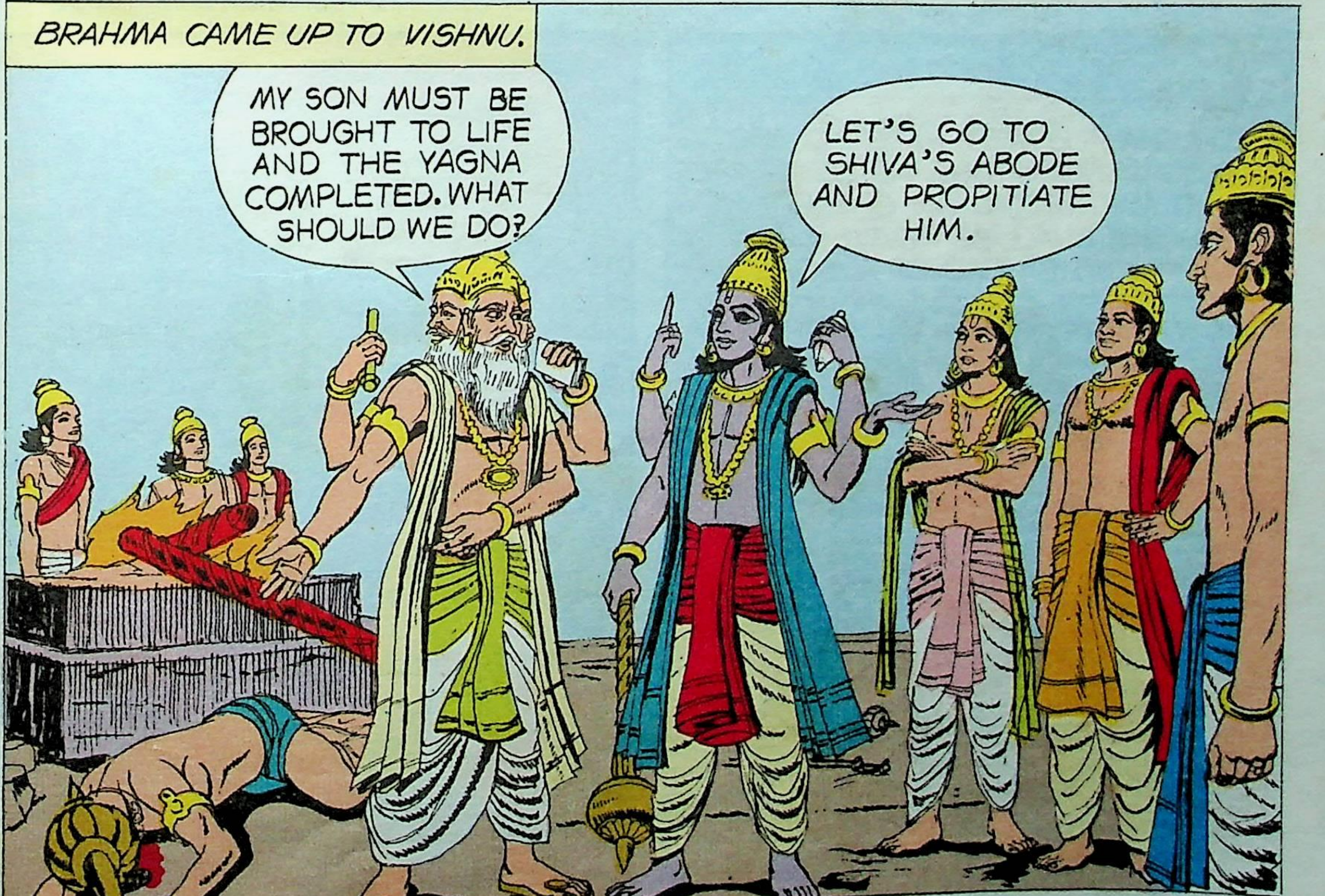




HIS TASK ACCOMPLISHED, HE RETURNED TO KAILAS.

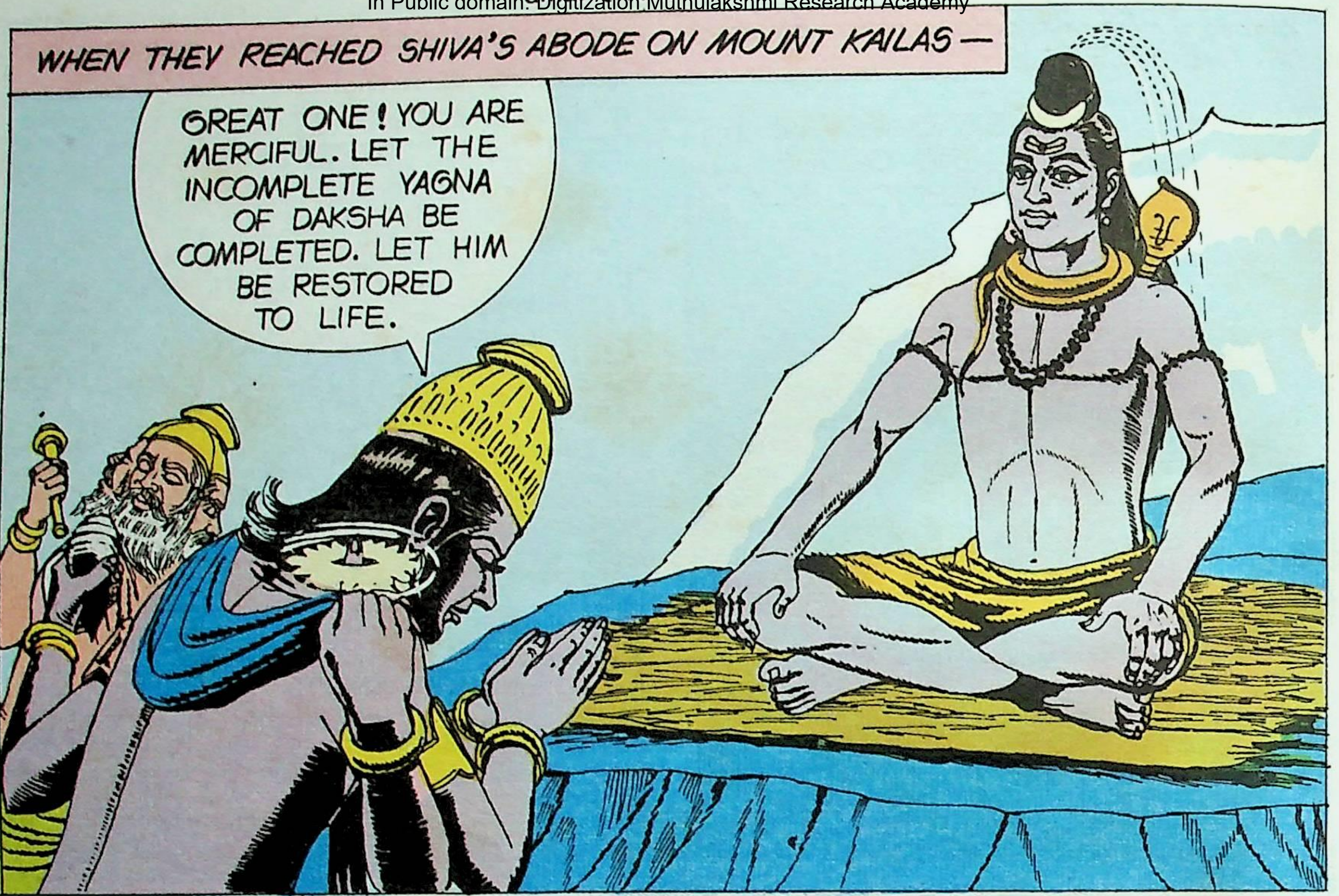


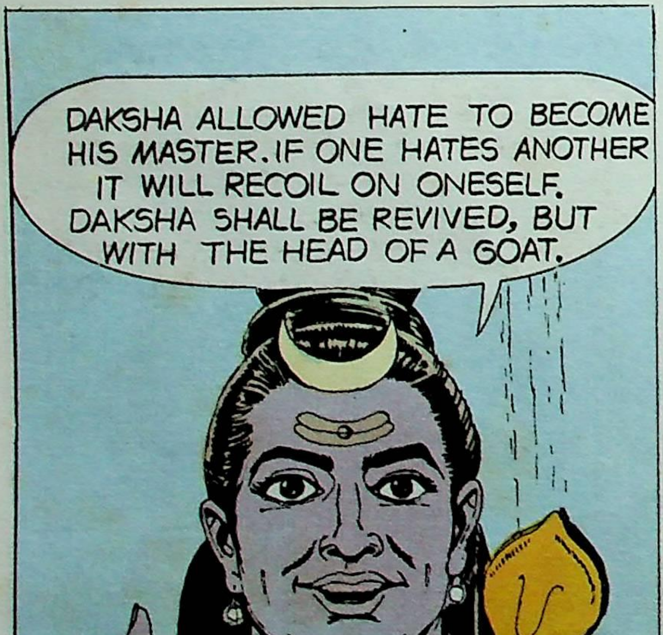
AS VIRABHADRA LEFT, COOL FRAGRANT BREEZES BLEW, REVIVING ALL THOSE WHO HAD FALLEN.

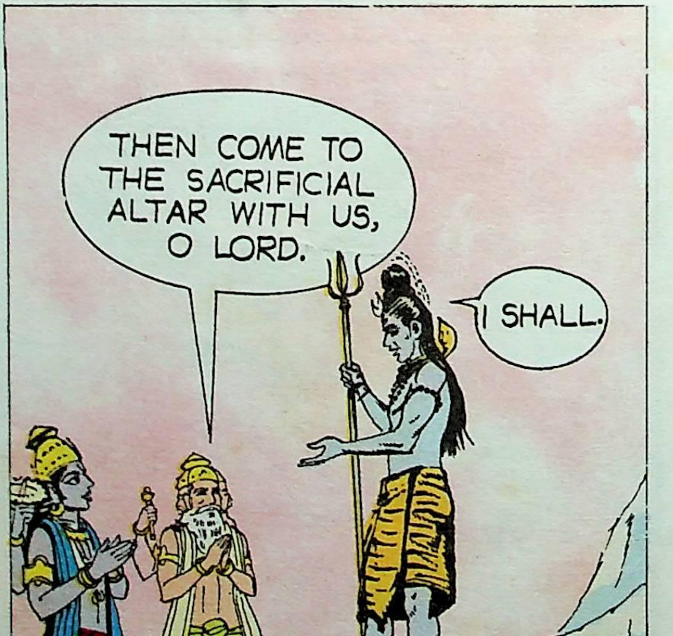


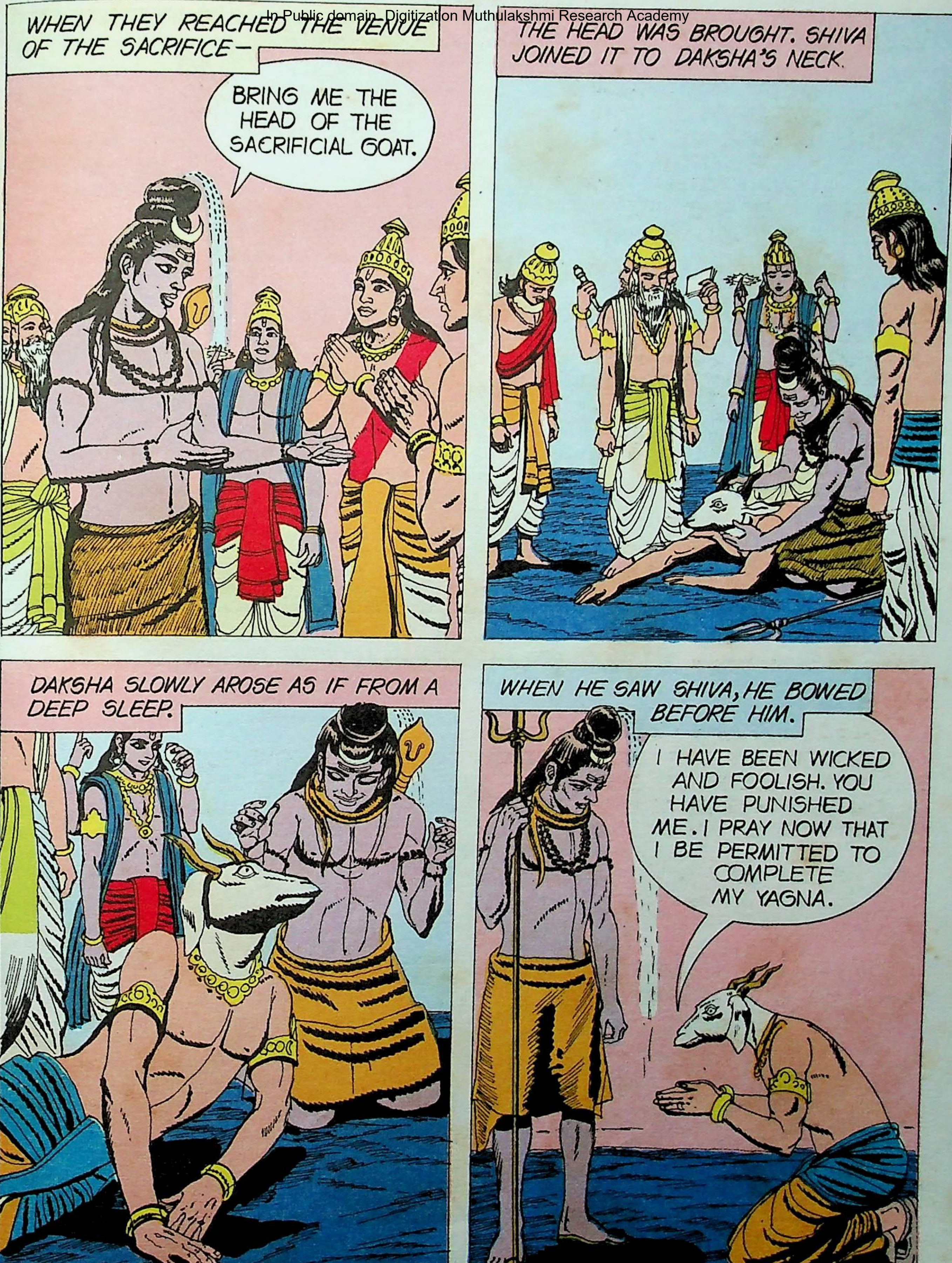
BRAHMA CAME UP TO VISHNU.

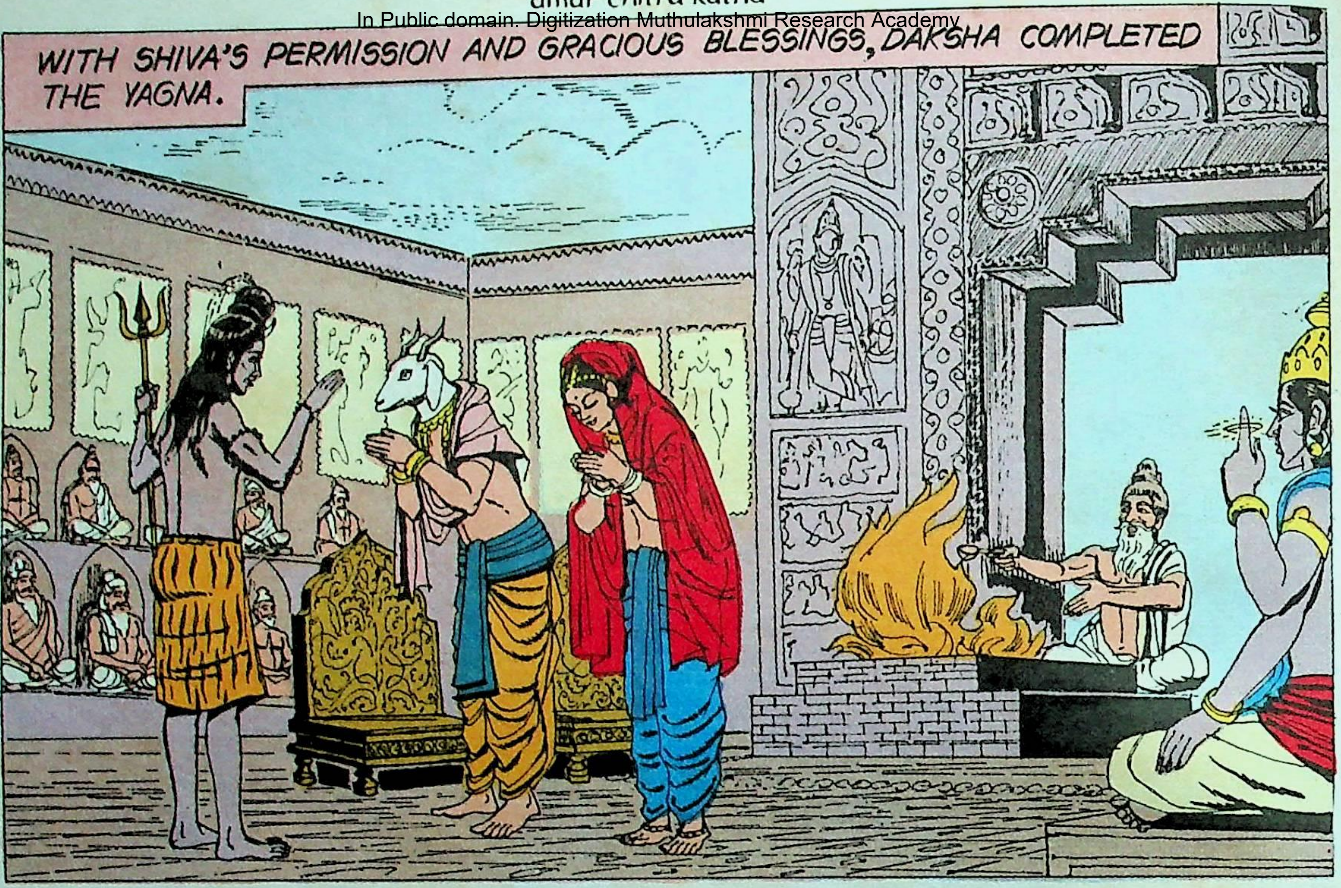
MY SON MUST BE BROUGHT TO LIFE AND THE YAGNA COMPLETED. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
LET'S GO TO SHIVA'S ABODE AND PROPITIATE HIM.

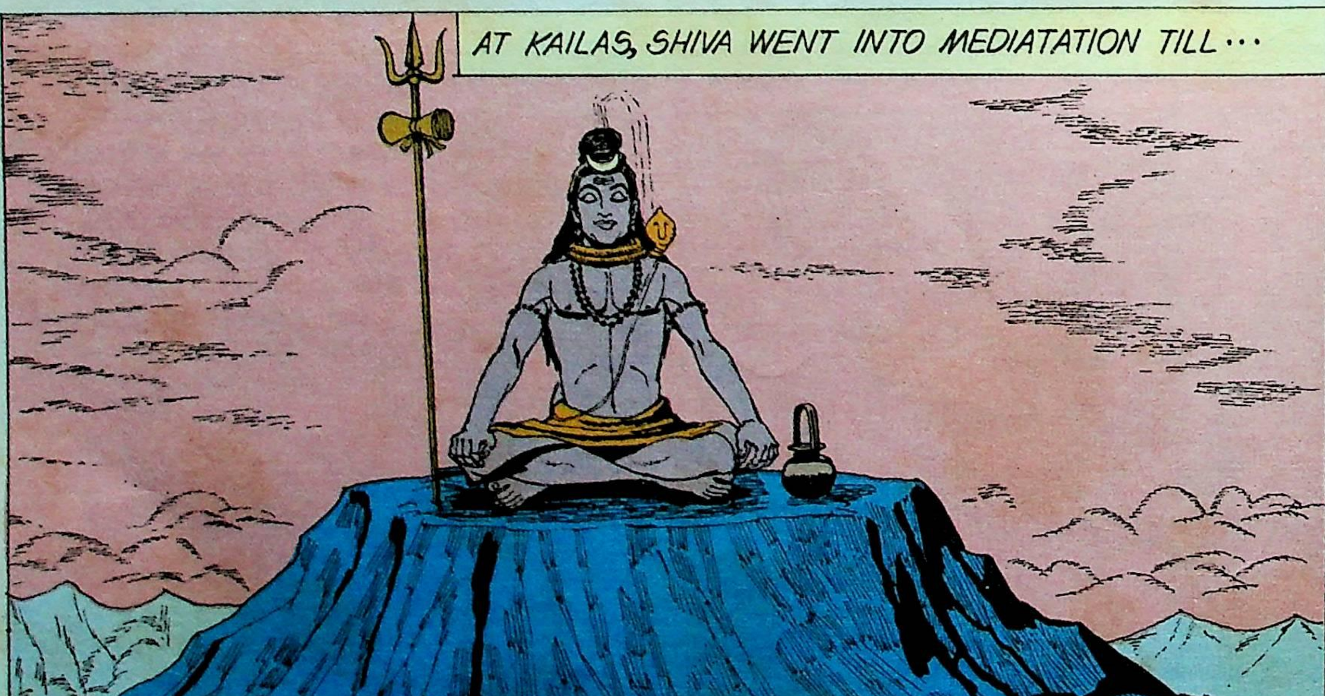

WHEN THEY REACHED SHIVA'S ABODE ON MOUNT KAILAS —
GREAT ONE ! YOU ARE MERCIFUL. LET THE INCOMPLETE YAGNA OF DAKSHA BE COMPLETED. LET HIM BE RESTORED TO LIFE.


DAKSHA ALLOWED HATE TO BECOME HIS MASTER. IF ONE HATES ANOTHER IT WILL RECOIL ON ONESELF. DAKSHA SHALL BE REVIVED, BUT WITH THE HEAD OF A GOAT.


THEN COME TO THE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR WITH US, O LORD.
I SHALL.


WHEN THEY REACHED THE VENUE OF THE SACRIFICE—
BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE SACRIFICIAL GOAT.
THE HEAD WAS BROUGHT. SHIVA JOINED IT TO DAKSHA'S NECK.
DAKSHA SLOWLY AROSE AS IF FROM A DEEP SLEEP.
WHEN HE SAW SHIVA, HE BOWED BEFORE HIM.
I HAVE BEEN WICKED AND FOOLISH. YOU HAVE PUNISHED ME. I PRAY NOW THAT I BE PERMITTED TO COMPLETE MY YAGNA.


WITH SHIVA'S PERMISSION AND GRACIOUS BLESSINGS, DAKSHA COMPLETED THE YAGNA.


AT KAILAS, SHIVA WENT INTO MEDIATATION TILL ...
...SATI, TRUE TO HER WORD, WAS REBORN AS PARVATI TO HIMAVAN, A FATHER SHE COULD LOVE AND RESPECT AND WHO LOVED AND RESPECTED HER. AND AS PARVATI SHE WOOED AND WON SHIVA, NEVER TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIM AGAIN.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

THE PARIJATA TREE

AND OTHER TALES OF KRISHNA

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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

THE PARIJATA TREE

When Satyabhama, Krishna's fiery wife, gets offended by the behaviour of Indra's wife Shachi, the two gods come to war over the lovely Parijata tree.

The princess Lakshmana is determined to marry Krishna. Her father must ensure that during the swayamvara only Krishna will win his daughter.

Sage Narada provokes Satyabhama into agreeing to give him Krishna, unless she can find something heavier than him. But all her possessions together prove to be lighter than Krishna.

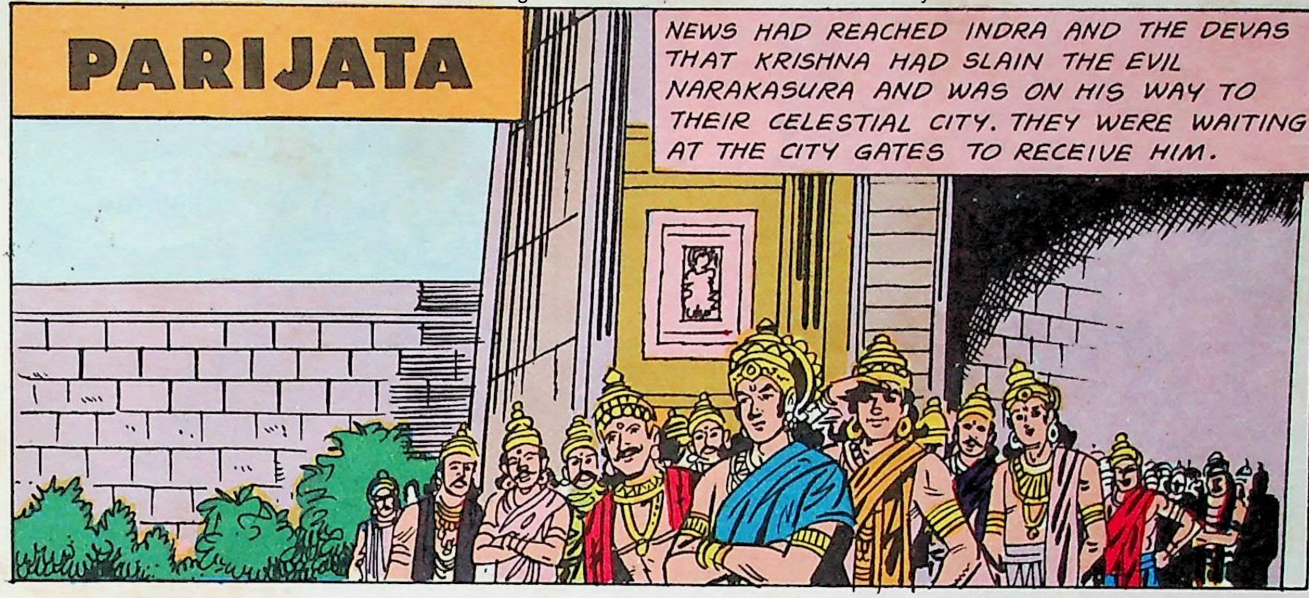
Script
Kamala Chandrakant
Subba Rao

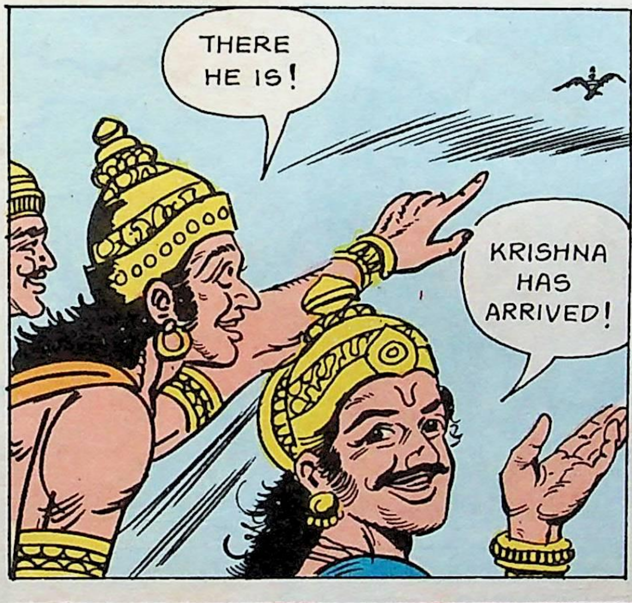
Illustrations
Ram Waeerkar

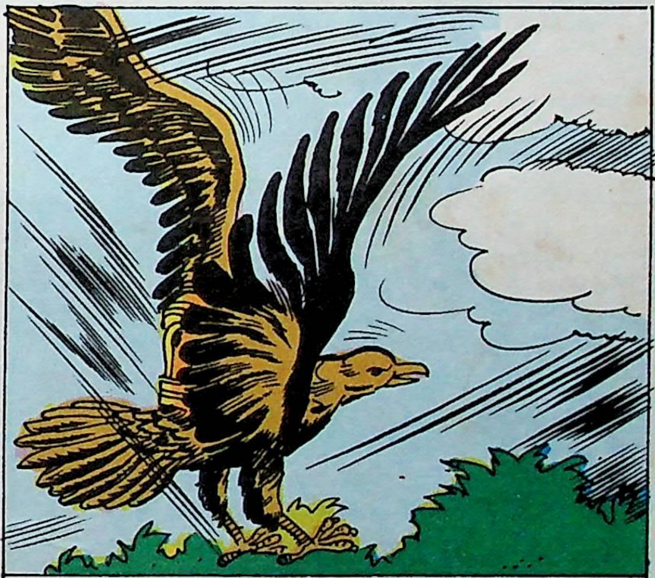
Editor
Anant Pai

PARIJATA

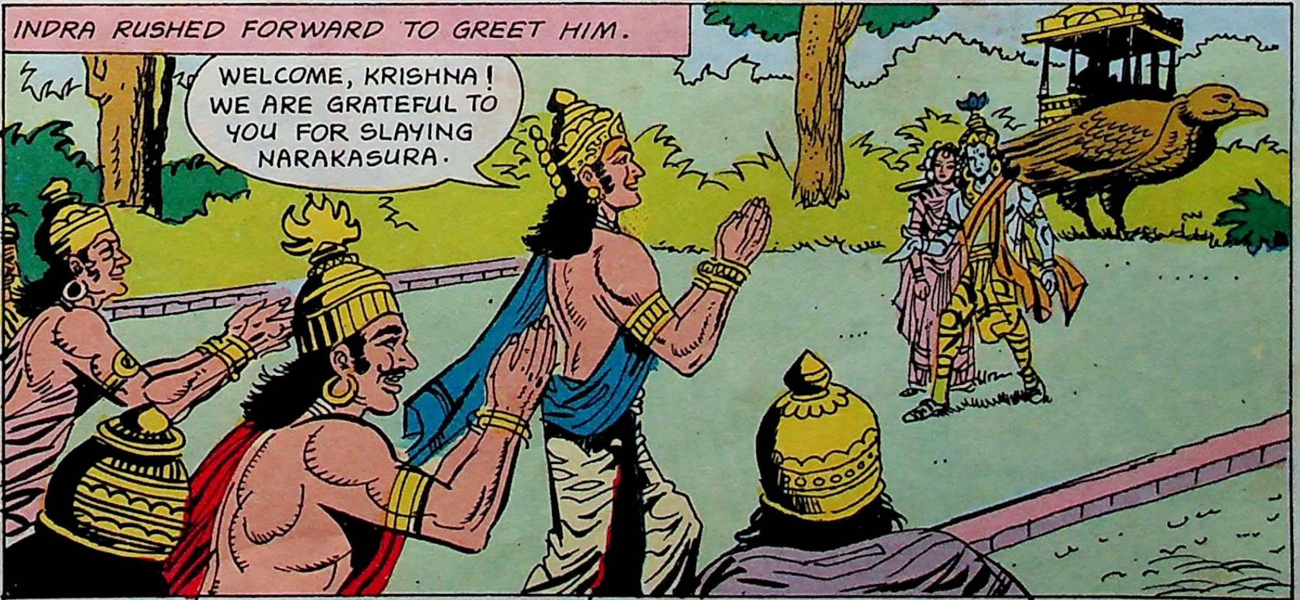
NEWS HAD REACHED INDRA AND THE DEVAS THAT KRISHNA HAD SLAIN THE EVIL NARAKASURA AND WAS ON HIS WAY TO THEIR CELESTIAL CITY. THEY WERE WAITING AT THE CITY GATES TO RECEIVE HIM.

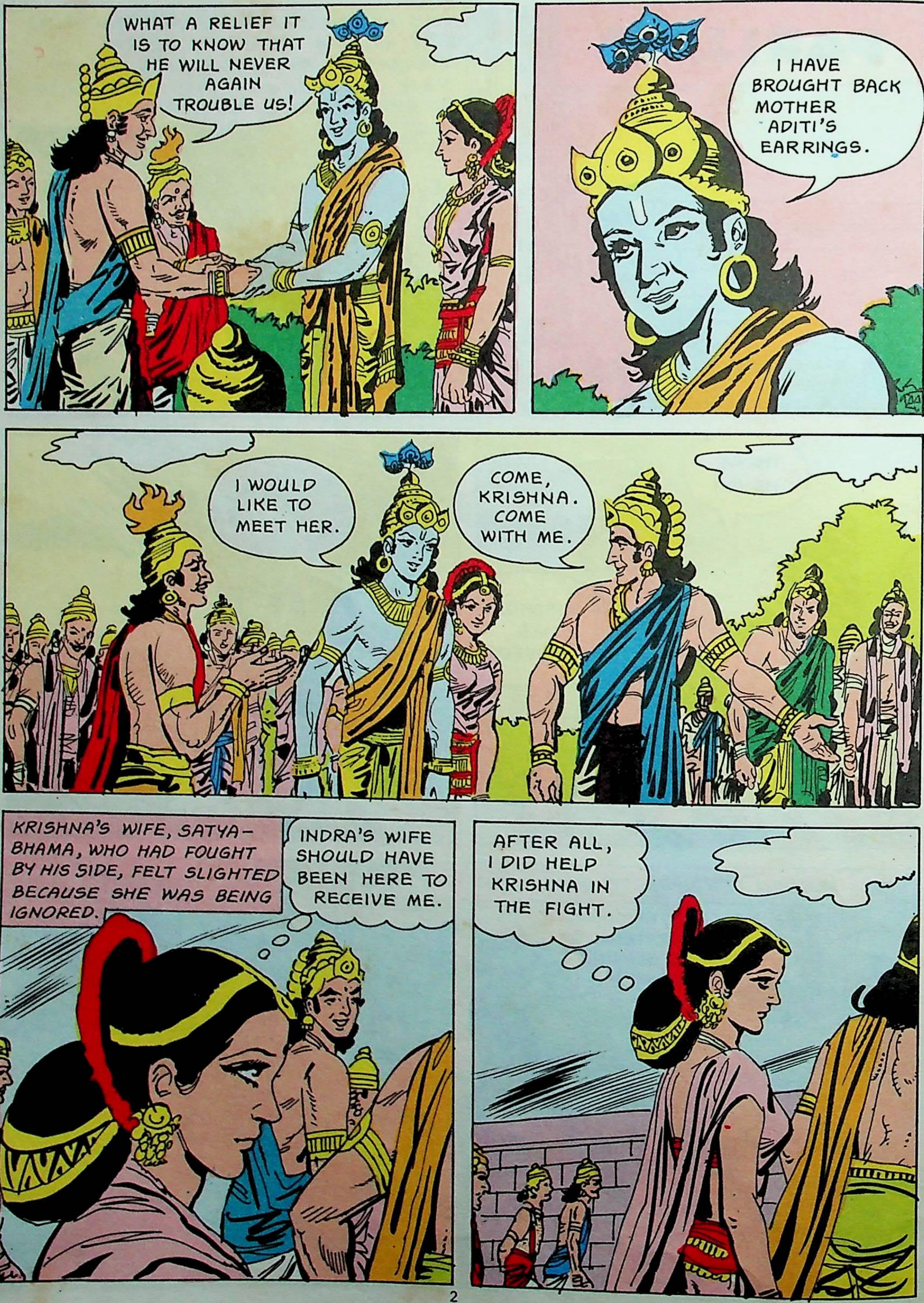


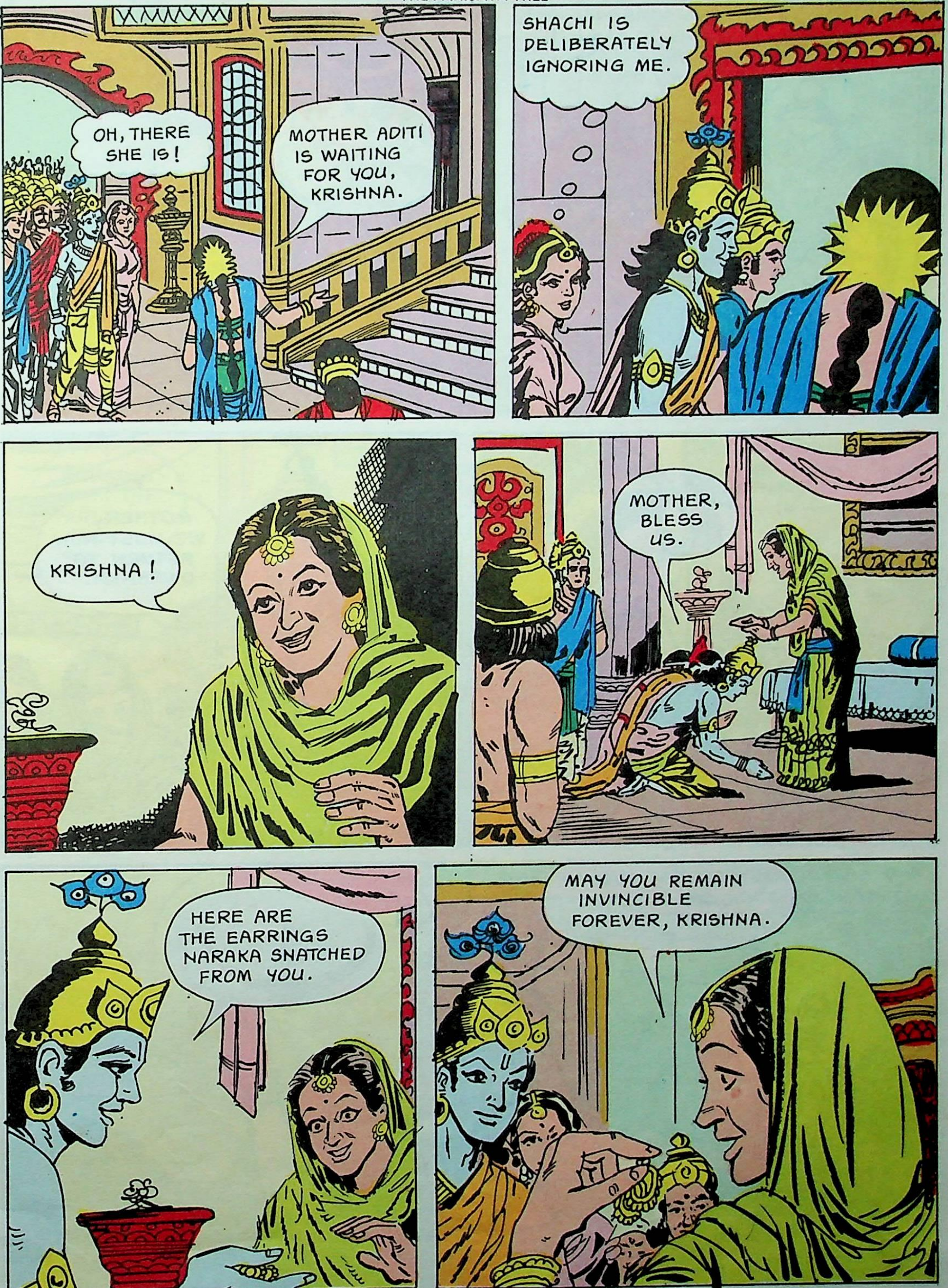

THERE HE IS!
KRISHNA HAS ARRIVED!

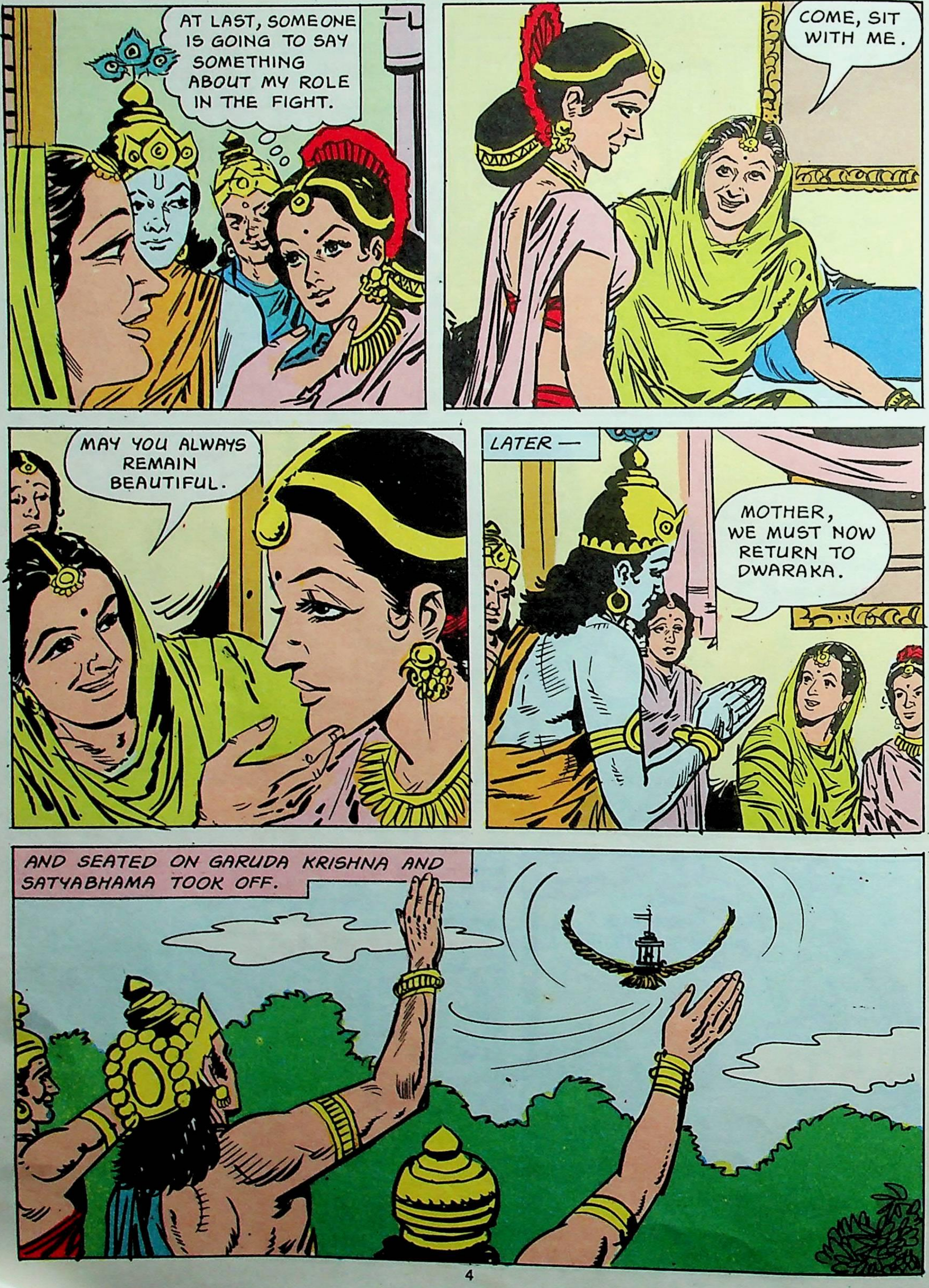


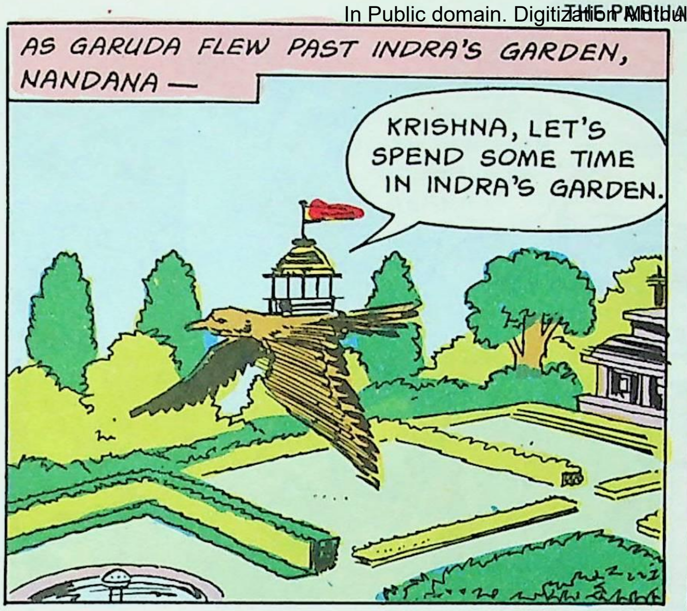
INDRA RUSHED FORWARD TO GREET HIM.

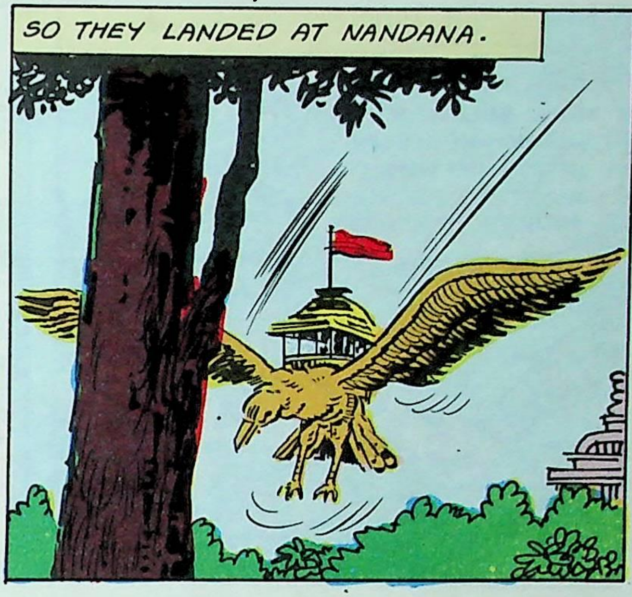

WELCOME, KRISHNA! WE ARE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR SLAYING NARAKASURA.

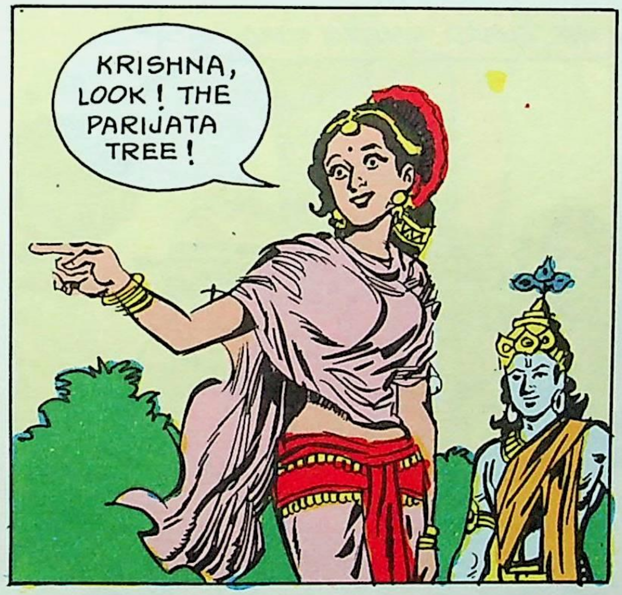

WHAT A RELIEF IT IS TO KNOW THAT HE WILL NEVER AGAIN TROUBLE US!
I HAVE BROUGHT BACK MOTHER ADITI'S EARRINGS.
I WOULD LIKE TO MEET HER.
COME, KRISHNA. COME WITH ME.
KRISHNA'S WIFE, SATYABHAMA, WHO HAD FOUGHT BY HIS SIDE, FELT SLIGHTED BECAUSE SHE WAS BEING IGNORED.
INDRA'S WIFE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE TO RECEIVE ME.
AFTER ALL, I DID HELP KRISHNA IN THE FIGHT.

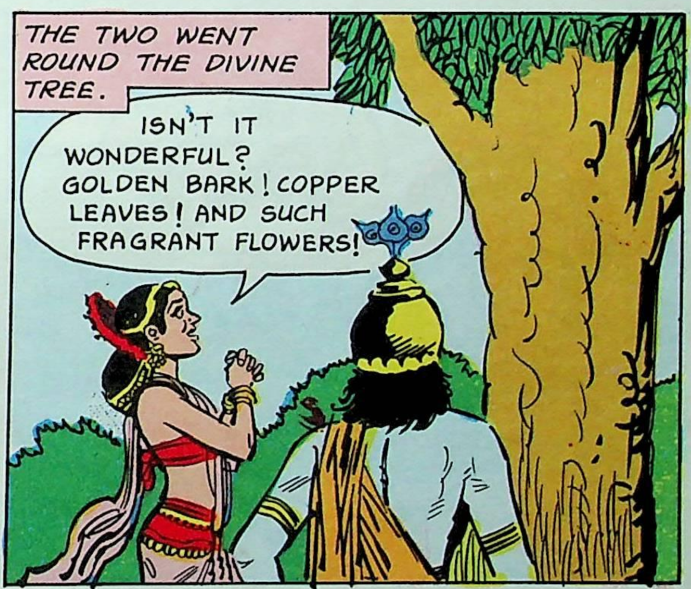

OH, THERE SHE IS!
MOTHER ADITI IS WAITING FOR YOU, KRISHNA.
SHACHI IS DELIBERATELY IGNORING ME.
KRISHNA!
MOTHER, BLESS US.
HERE ARE THE EARRINGS NARAKA SNATCHED FROM YOU.
MAY YOU REMAIN INVINCIBLE FOREVER, KRISHNA.

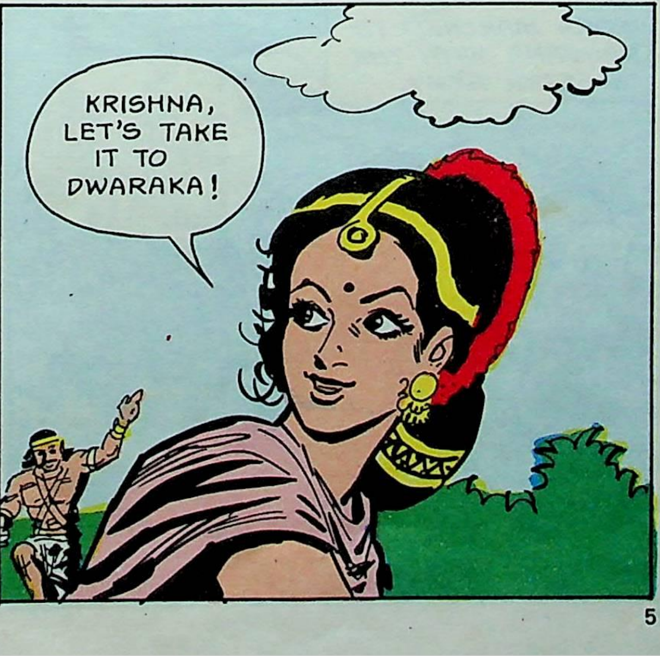

AT LAST, SOMEONE IS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT MY ROLE IN THE FIGHT.
COME, SIT WITH ME.
MAY YOU ALWAYS REMAIN BEAUTIFUL.
LATER —
MOTHER, WE MUST NOW RETURN TO DWARAKA.
AND SEATED ON GARUDA KRISHNA AND SATYABHAMA TOOK OFF.

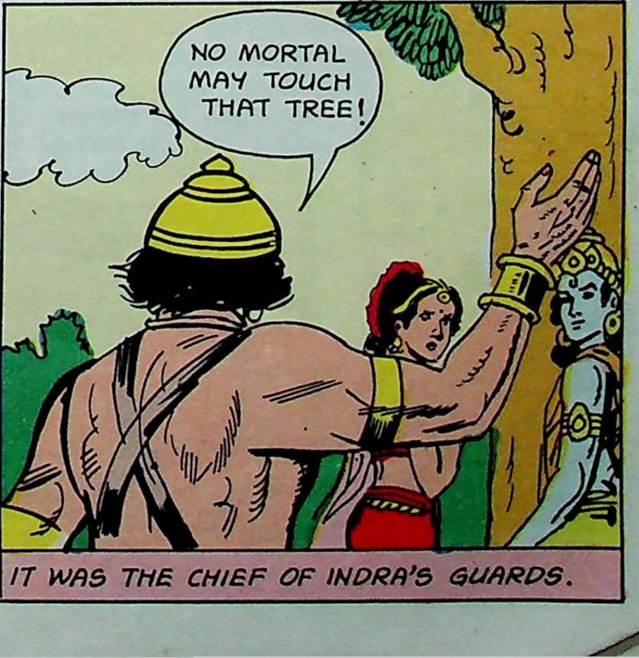

AS GARUDA FLEW PAST INDRA'S GARDEN, NANDANA —
KRISHNA, LET'S SPEND SOME TIME IN INDRA'S GARDEN.

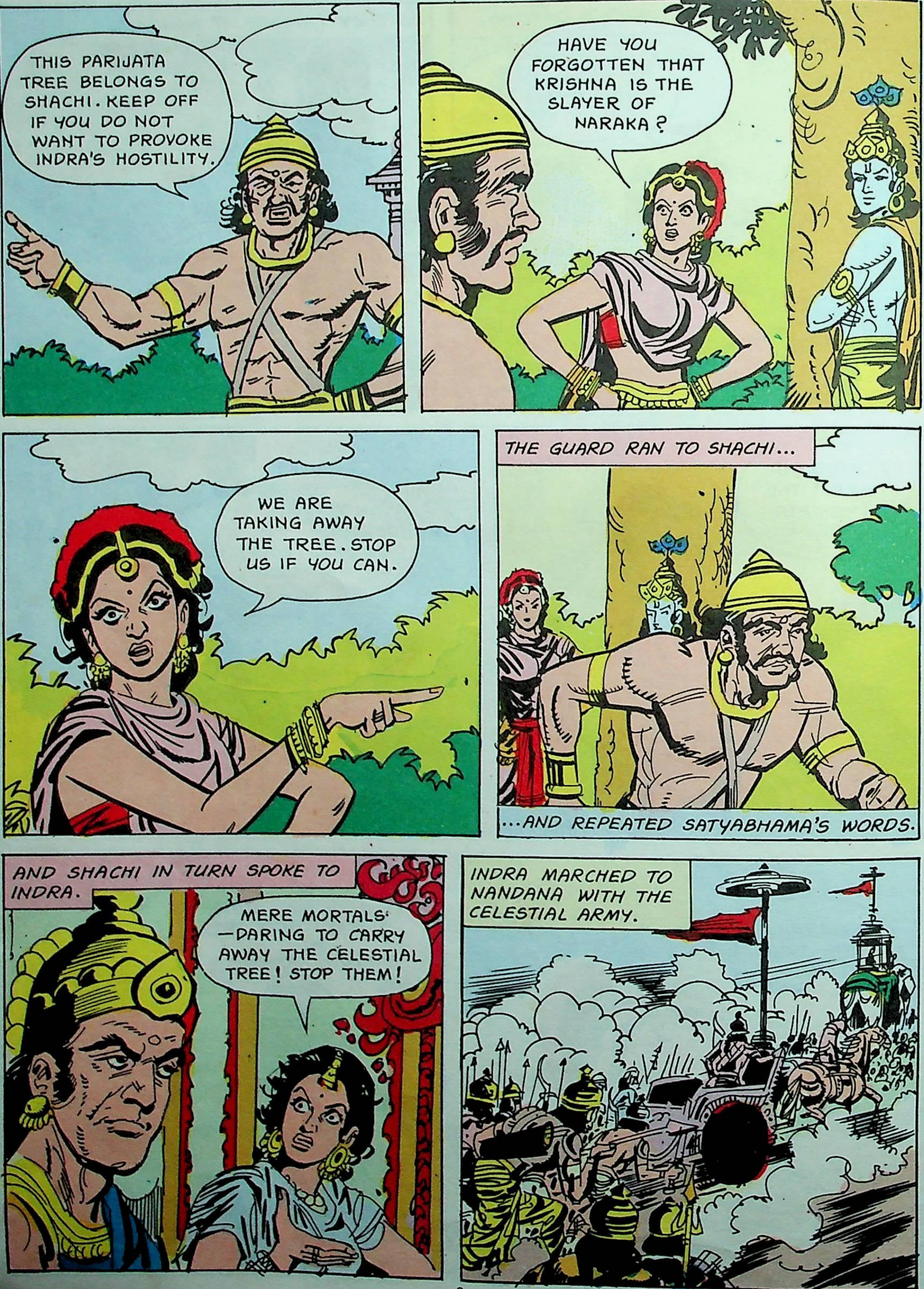

SO THEY LANDED AT NANDANA.

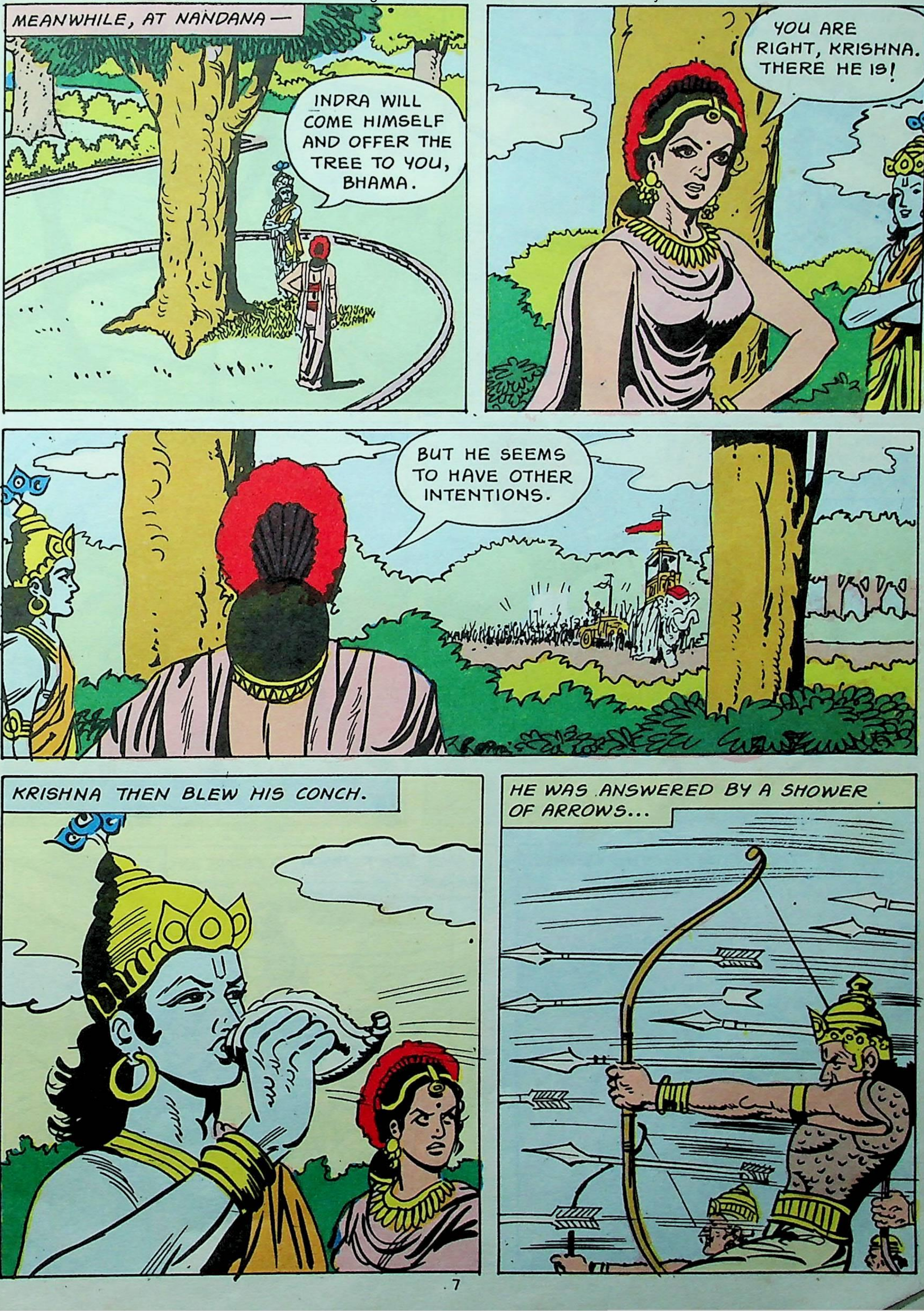

KRISHNA, LOOK! THE PARIJATA TREE!

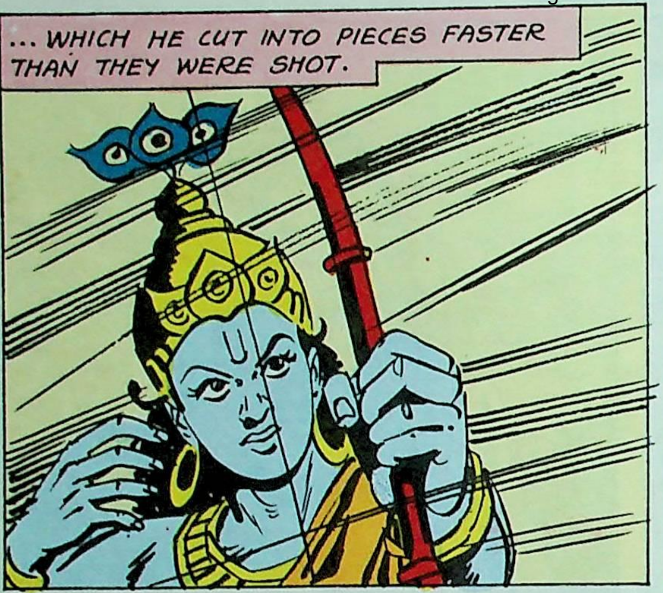

THE TWO WENT ROUND THE DIVINE TREE.
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL? GOLDEN BARK! COPPER LEAVES! AND SUCH FRAGRANT FLOWERS!

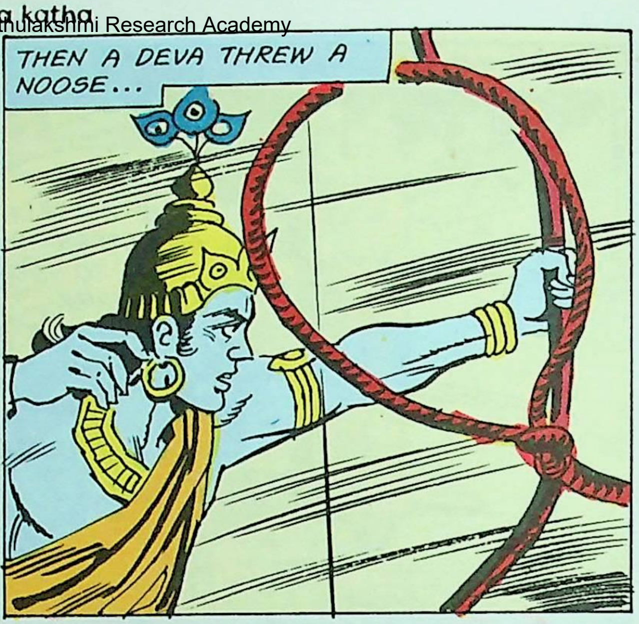

KRISHNA, LET'S TAKE IT TO DWARAKA!

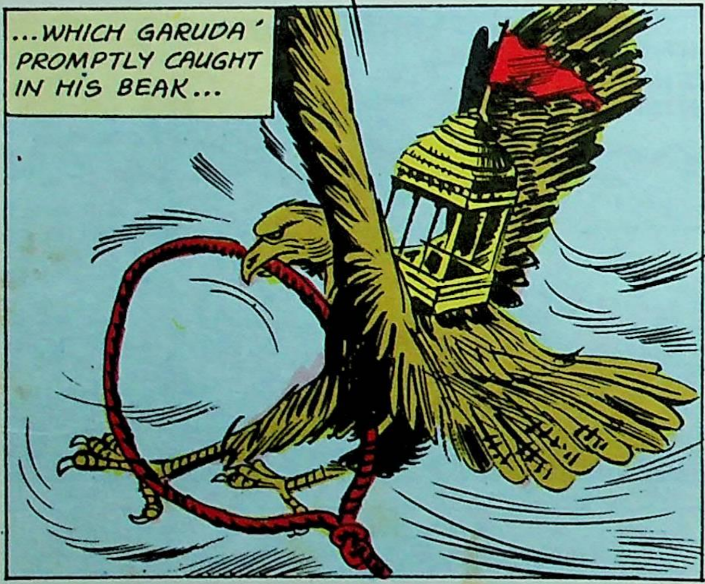

NO MORTAL MAY TOUCH THAT TREE!
IT WAS THE CHIEF OF INDRA'S GUARDS.

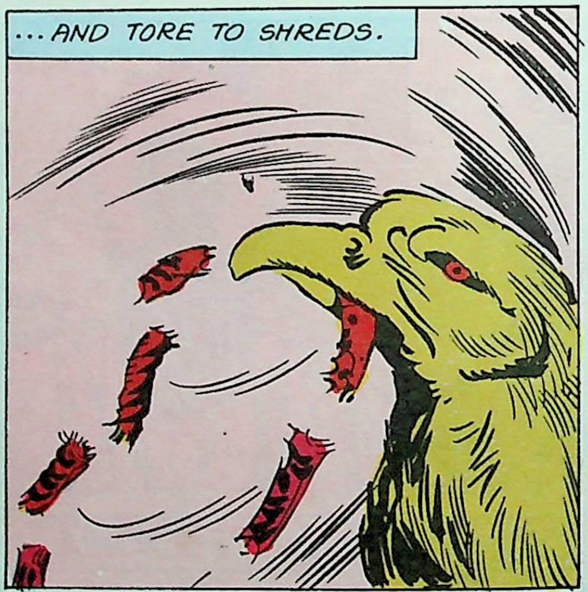

THIS PARIJATA TREE BELONGS TO SHACHI. KEEP OFF IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO PROVOKE INDRA'S HOSTILITY.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT KRISHNA IS THE SLAYER OF NARAKA?
WE ARE TAKING AWAY THE TREE. STOP US IF YOU CAN.
THE GUARD RAN TO SHACHI...
...AND REPEATED SATYABHAMA'S WORDS.
AND SHACHI IN TURN SPOKE TO INDRA.
MERE MORTALS —DARING TO CARRY AWAY THE CELESTIAL TREE! STOP THEM!
INDRA MARCHED TO NANDANA WITH THE CELESTIAL ARMY.

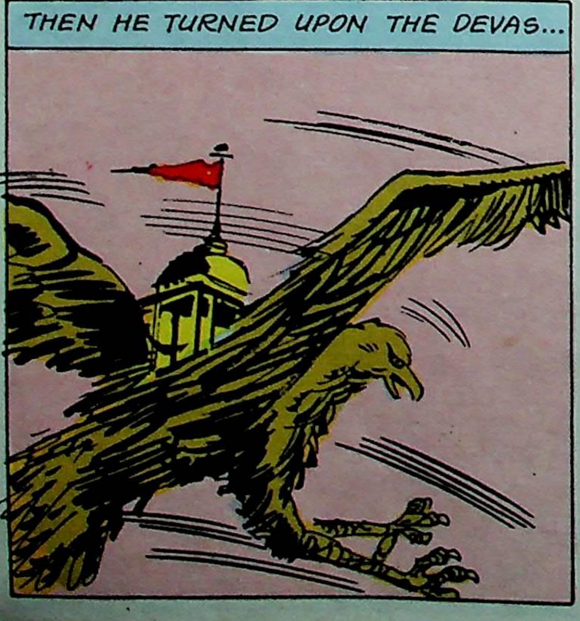

MEANWHILE, AT NANDANA—
INDRA WILL COME HIMSELF AND OFFER THE TREE TO YOU, BHAMA.
YOU ARE RIGHT, KRISHNA. THERE HE IS!
BUT HE SEEMS TO HAVE OTHER INTENTIONS.
KRISHNA THEN BLEW HIS CONCH.
HE WAS ANSWERED BY A SHOWER OF ARROWS...

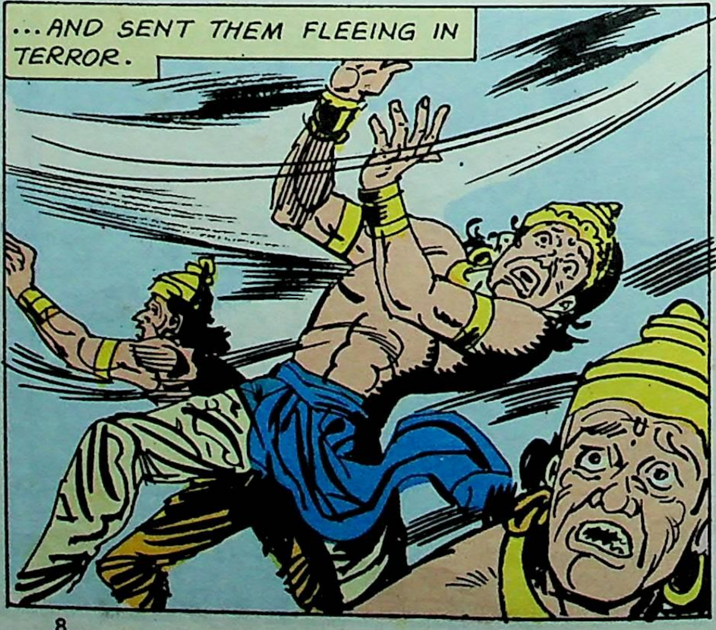

...WHICH HE CUT INTO PIECES FASTER THAN THEY WERE SHOT.

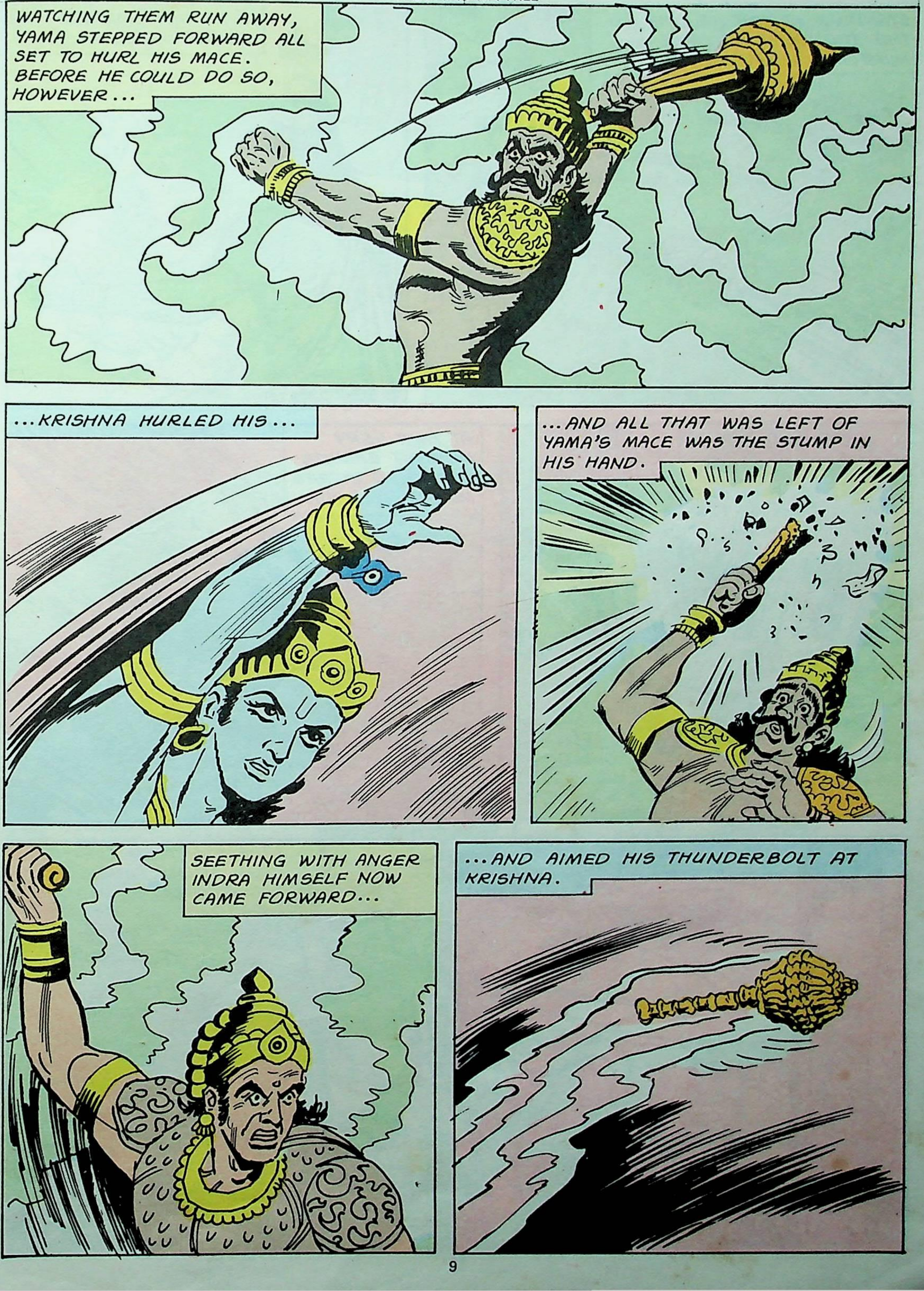

THEN A DEVA THREW A NOOSE...

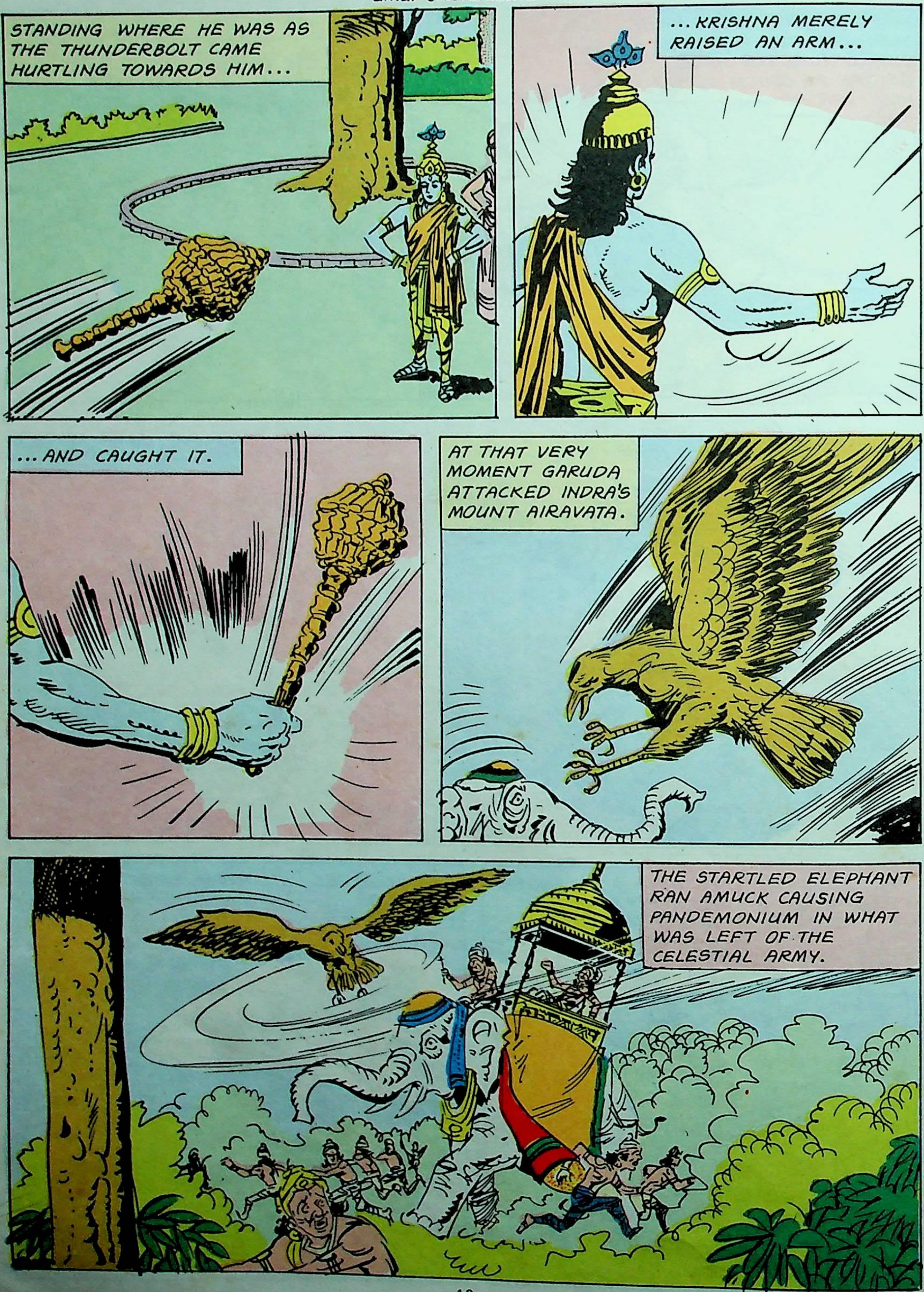

...WHICH GARUDA PROMPTLY CAUGHT IN HIS BEAK...

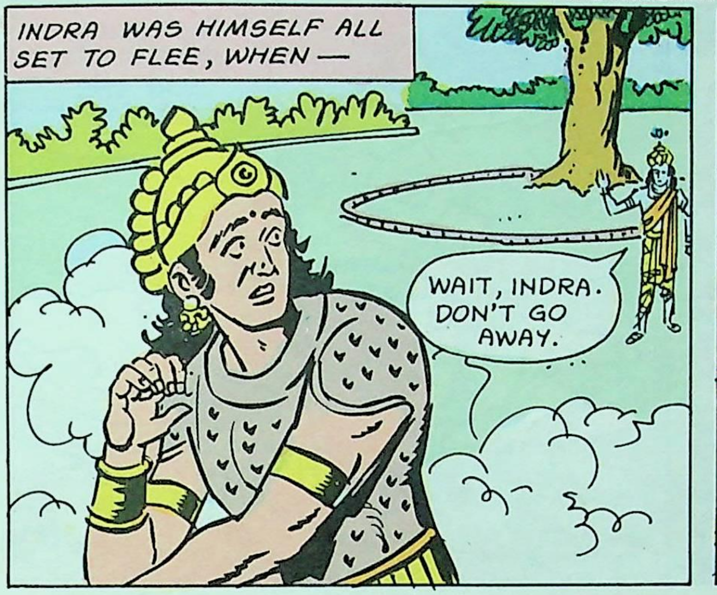

...AND TORE TO SHREDS.

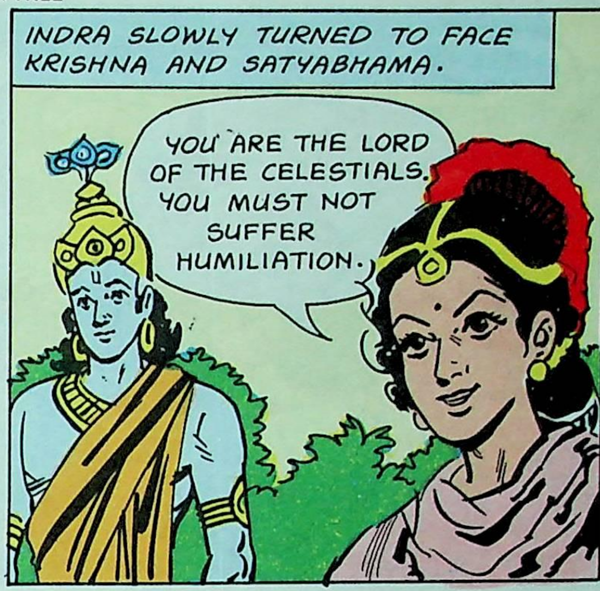

THEN HE TURNED UPON THE DEVAS...

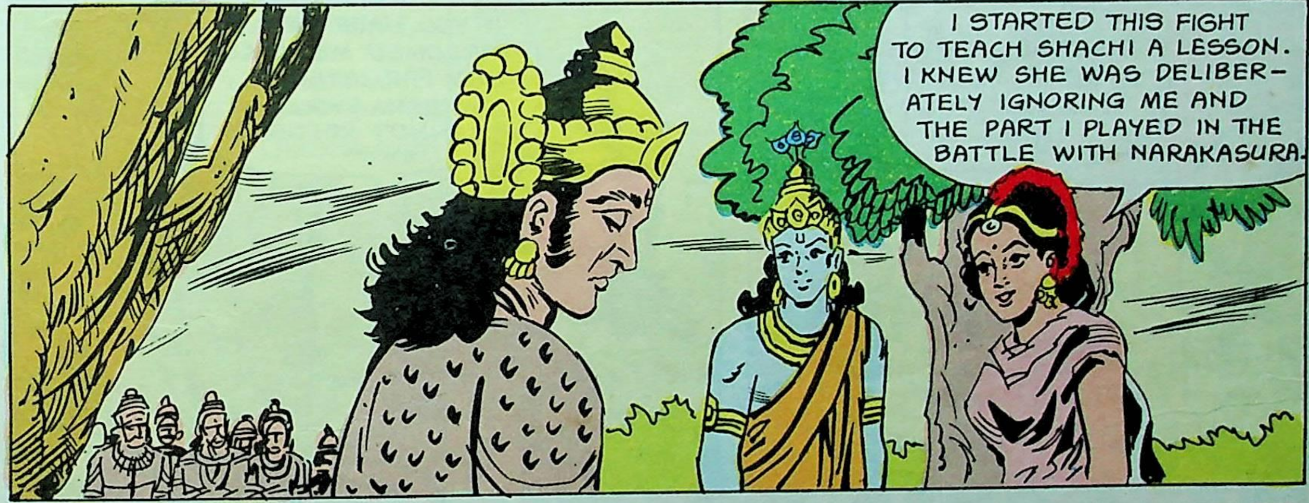

...AND SENT THEM FLEEING IN TERROR.

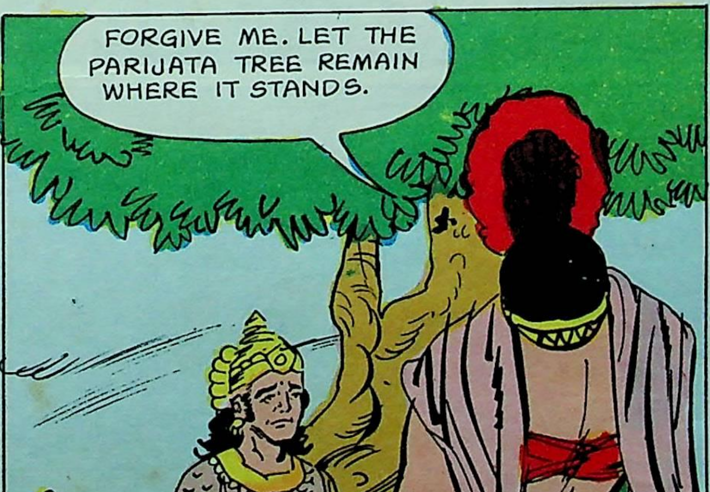

WATCHING THEM RUN AWAY, YAMA STEPPED FORWARD ALL SET TO HURL HIS MACE. BEFORE HE COULD DO SO, HOWEVER ...
...KRISHNA HURLED HIS ...
...AND ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF YAMA'S MACE WAS THE STUMP IN HIS HAND.
SEETHING WITH ANGER INDRA HIMSELF NOW CAME FORWARD...
...AND AIMED HIS THUNDERBOLT AT KRISHNA.

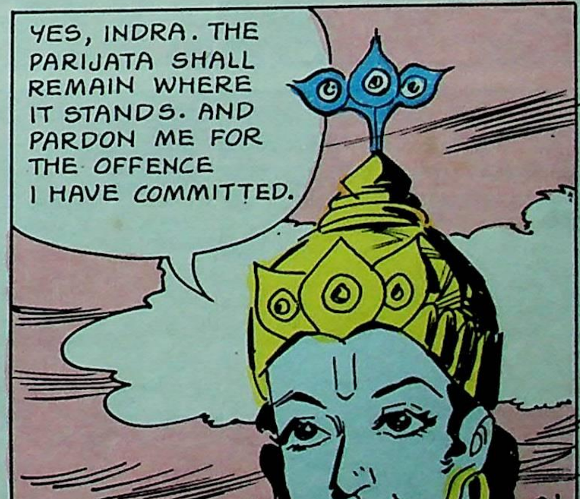

STANDING WHERE HE WAS AS THE THUNDERBOLT CAME HURTLING TOWARDS HIM...
...KRISHNA MERELY RAISED AN ARM...
...AND CAUGHT IT.
AT THAT VERY MOMENT GARUDA ATTACKED INDRA'S MOUNT AIRAVATA.
THE STARTLED ELEPHANT RAN AMUCK CAUSING PANDEMONIUM IN WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE CELESTIAL ARMY.

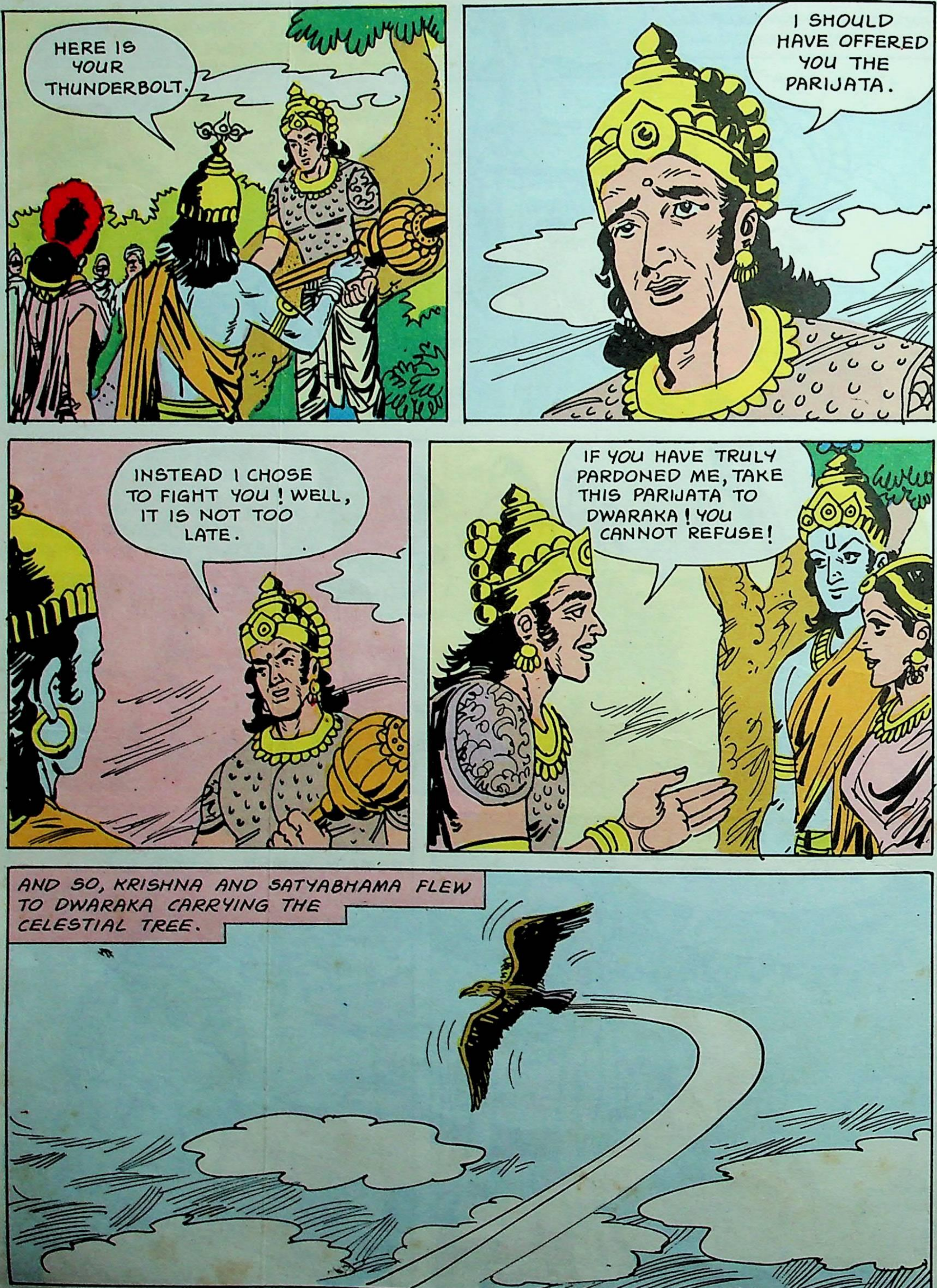

INDRA WAS HIMSELF ALL SET TO FLEE, WHEN —
WAIT, INDRA. DON'T GO AWAY.


INDRA SLOWLY TURNED TO FACE KRISHNA AND SATYABHAMA.
YOU ARE THE LORD OF THE CELESTIALS. YOU MUST NOT SUFFER HUMILIATION.

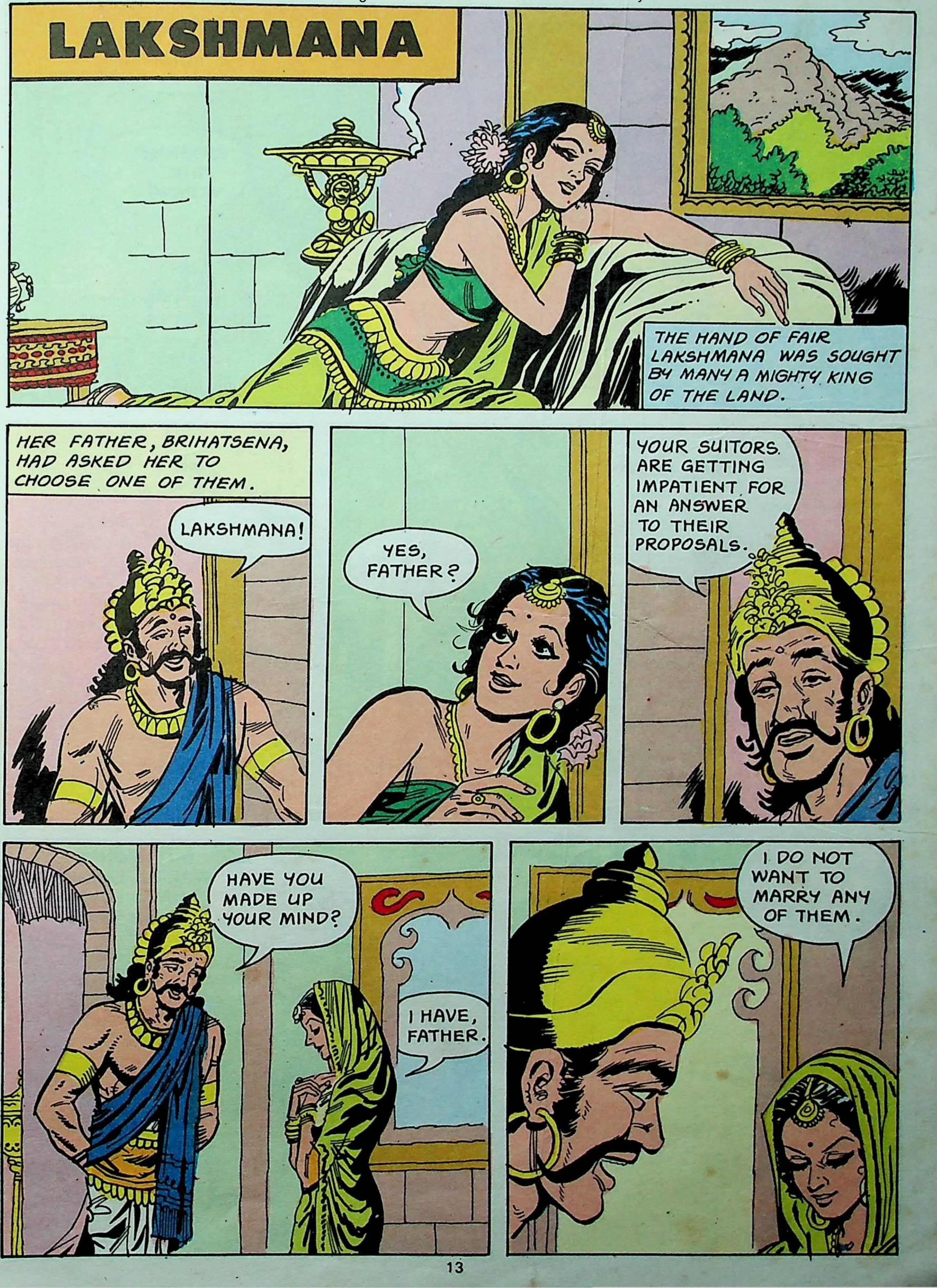

I STARTED THIS FIGHT TO TEACH SHACHI A LESSON. I KNEW SHE WAS DELIBERATELY IGNORING ME AND THE PART I PLAYED IN THE BATTLE WITH NARAKASURA.


FORGIVE ME. LET THE PARIJATA TREE REMAIN WHERE IT STANDS.


YES, INDRA. THE PARIJATA SHALL REMAIN WHERE IT STANDS. AND PARDON ME FOR THE OFFENCE I HAVE COMMITTED.


HERE IS YOUR THUNDERBOLT.
I SHOULD HAVE OFFERED YOU THE PARIJATA.
INSTEAD I CHOSE TO FIGHT YOU! WELL, IT IS NOT TOO LATE.
IF YOU HAVE TRULY PARDONED ME, TAKE THIS PARIJATA TO DWARAKA! YOU CANNOT REFUSE!
AND SO, KRISHNA AND SATYABHAMA FLEW TO DWARAKA CARRYING THE CELESTIAL TREE.

LAKSHMANA


THE HAND OF FAIR LAKSHMANA WAS SOUGHT BY MANY A MIGHTY KING OF THE LAND.
HER FATHER, BRIHATSENA, HAD ASKED HER TO CHOOSE ONE OF THEM.
LAKSHMANA!
YES, FATHER?
YOUR SUITORS ARE GETTING IMPATIENT FOR AN ANSWER TO THEIR PROPOSALS.
HAVE YOU MADE UP YOUR MIND?
I HAVE, FATHER.
I DO NOT WANT TO MARRY ANY OF THEM.

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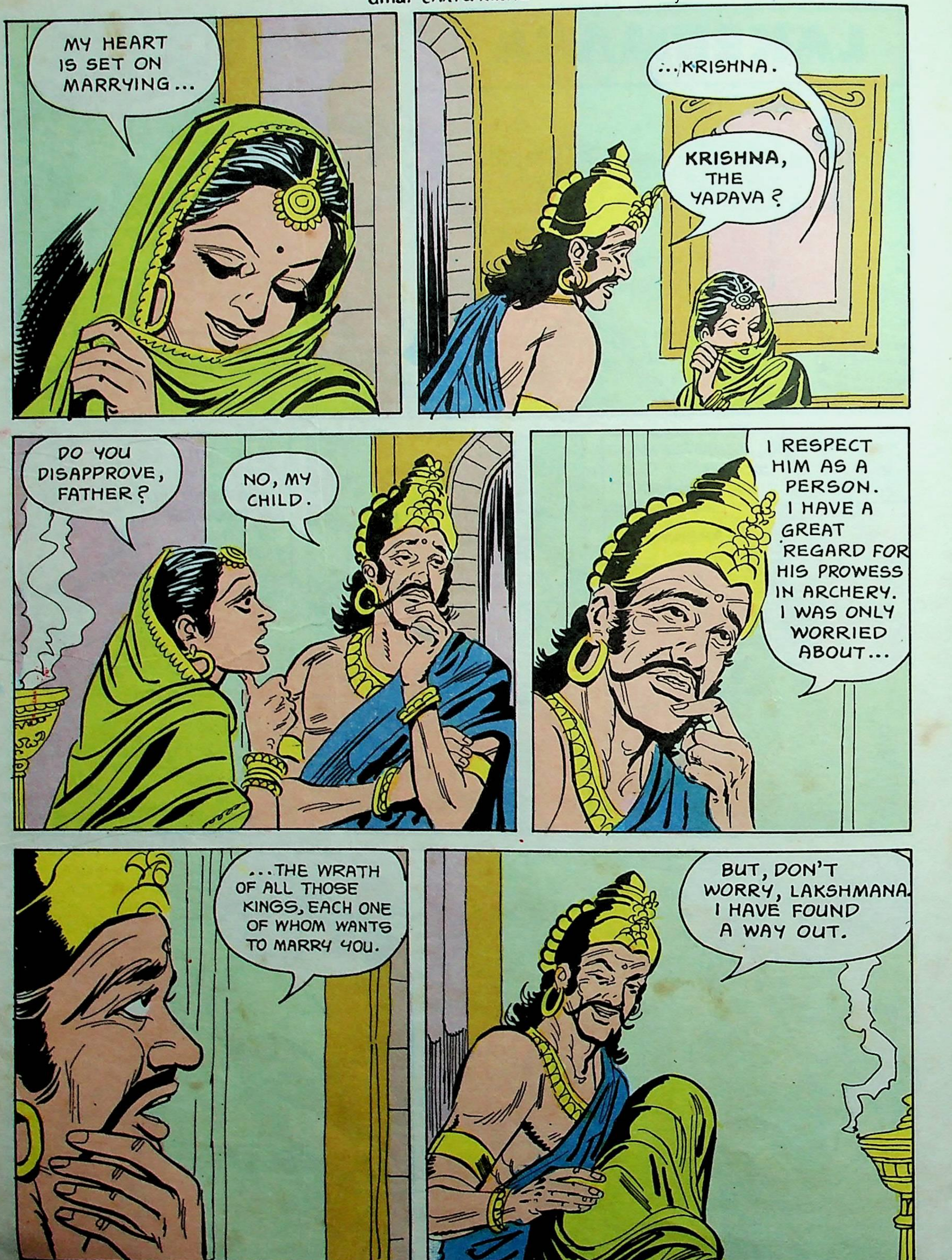
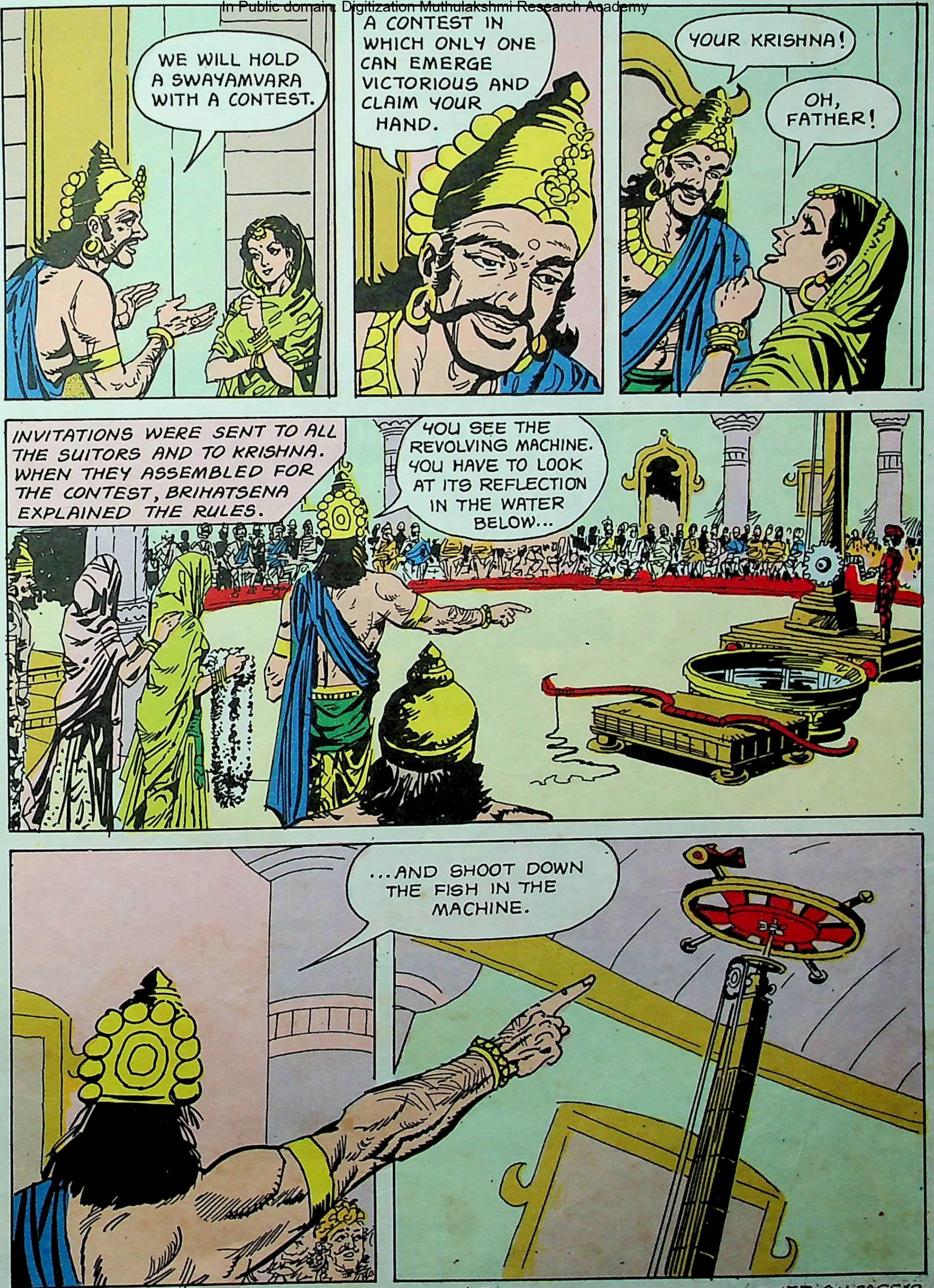
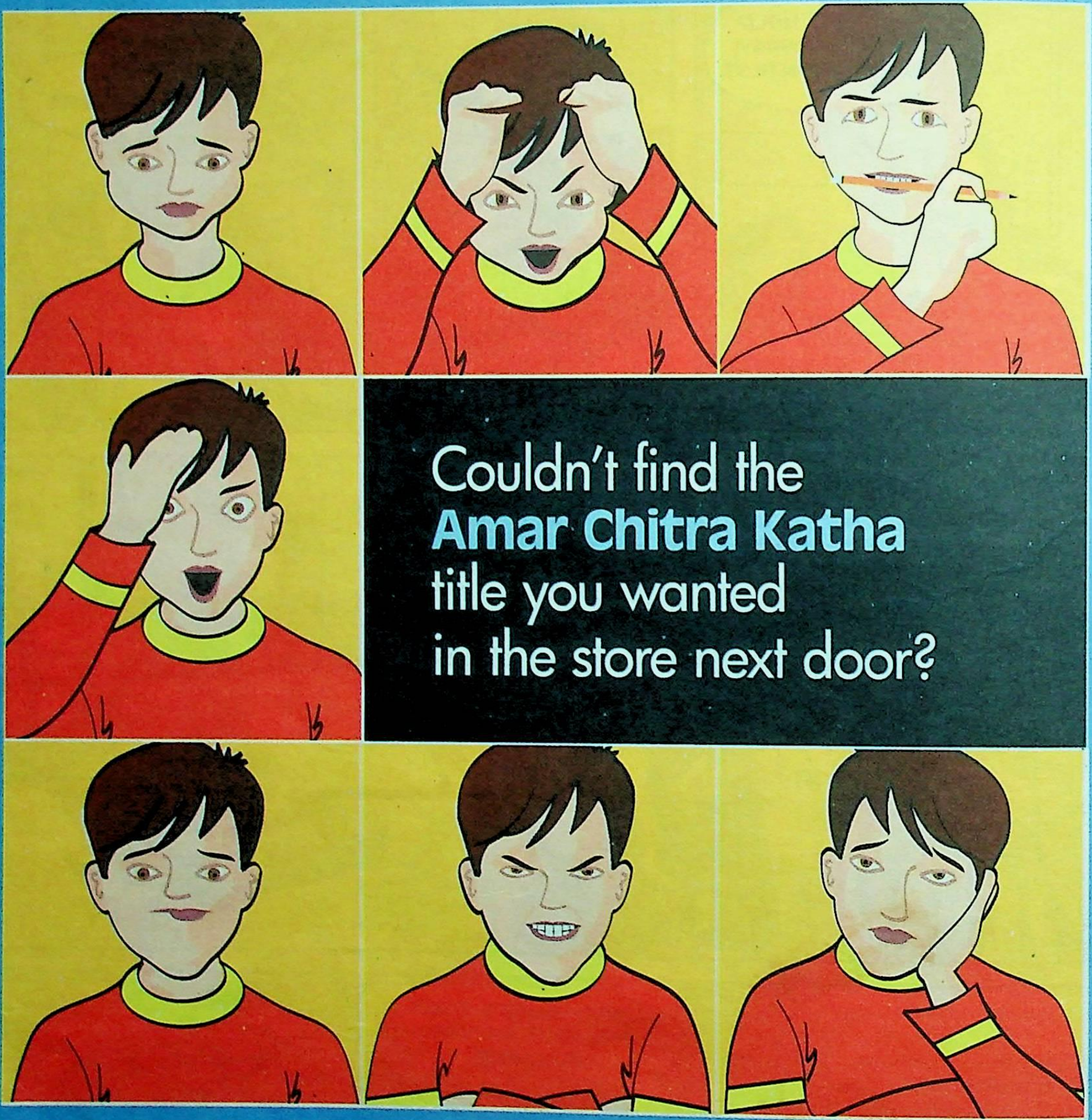

MY HEART IS SET ON MARRYING...
...KRISHNA.
KRISHNA, THE YADAVA?
DO YOU DISAPPROVE, FATHER?
NO, MY CHILD.
I RESPECT HIM AS A PERSON. I HAVE A GREAT REGARD FOR HIS PROWESS IN ARCHERY. I WAS ONLY WORRIED ABOUT...
...THE WRATH OF ALL THOSE KINGS, EACH ONE OF WHOM WANTS TO MARRY YOU.
BUT, DON'T WORRY, LAKSHMANA. I HAVE FOUND A WAY OUT.


WE WILL HOLD A SWAYAMVARA WITH A CONTEST.
A CONTEST IN WHICH ONLY ONE CAN EMERGE VICTORIOUS AND CLAIM YOUR HAND.
YOUR KRISHNA!
OH, FATHER!
INVITATIONS WERE SENT TO ALL THE SUITORS AND TO KRISHNA. WHEN THEY ASSEMBLED FOR THE CONTEST, BRIHATSENA EXPLAINED THE RULES.
YOU SEE THE REVOLVING MACHINE. YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT ITS REFLECTION IN THE WATER BELOW...
...AND SHOOT DOWN THE FISH IN THE MACHINE.

CONTD. ON PAGE 19



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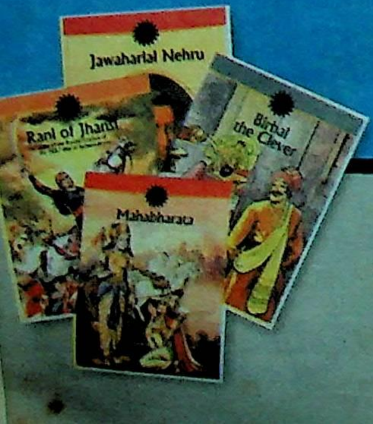
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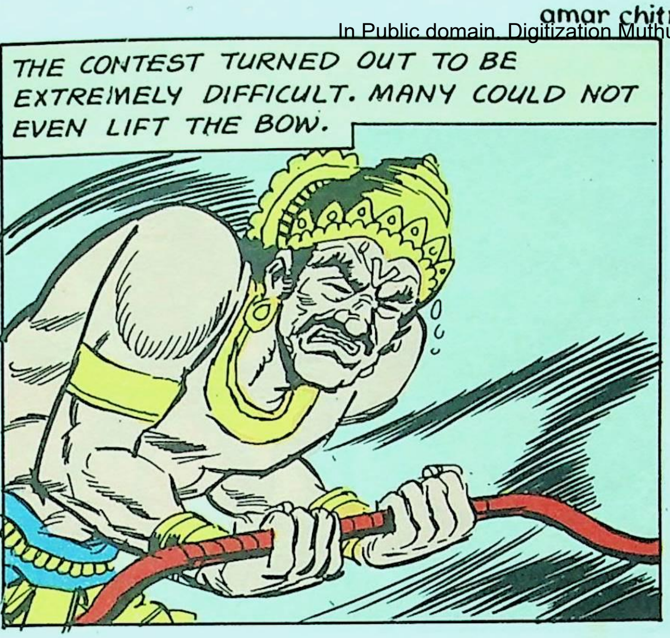
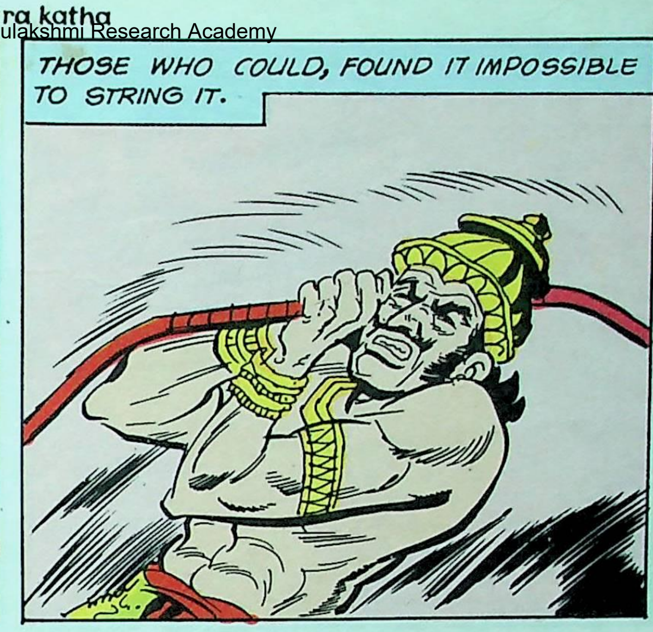
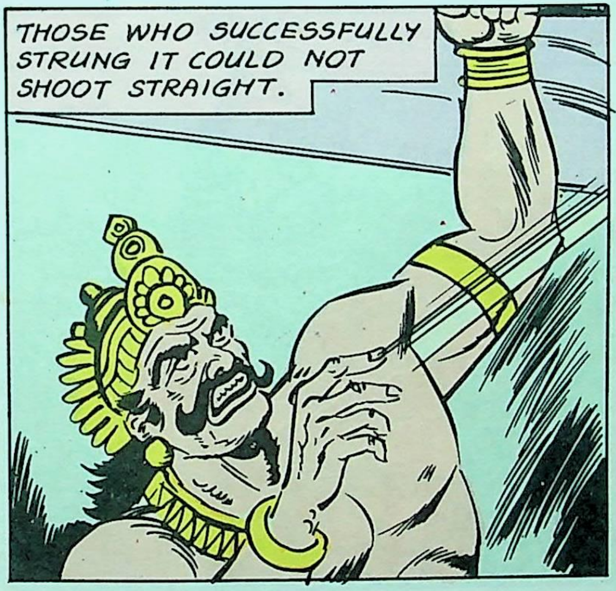


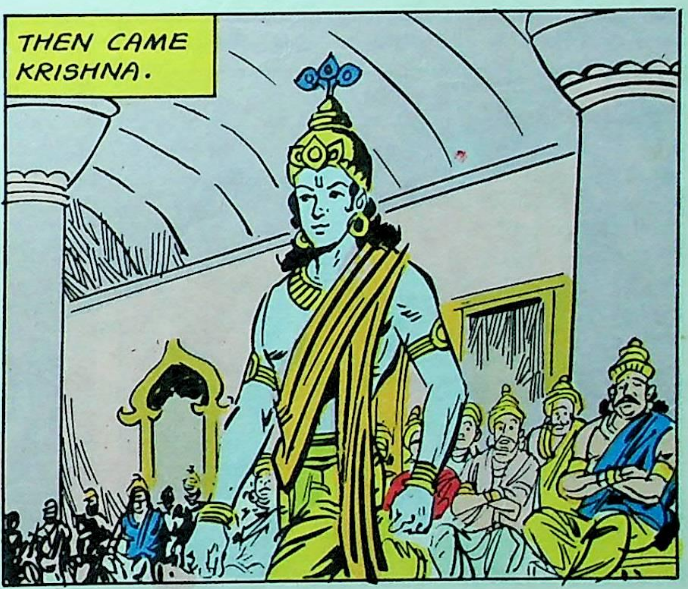
THE CONTEST TURNED OUT TO BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. MANY COULD NOT EVEN LIFT THE BOW.



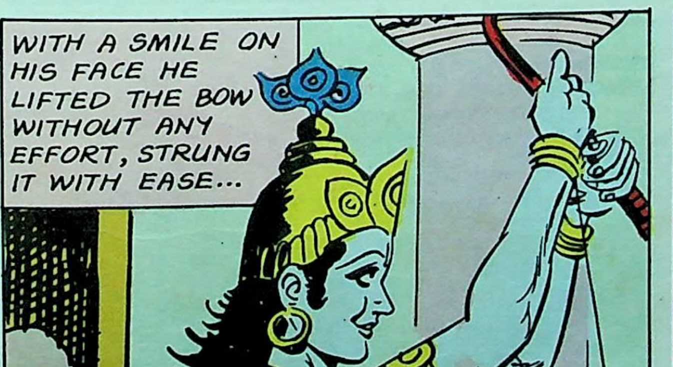
THOSE WHO COULD, FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO STRING IT.



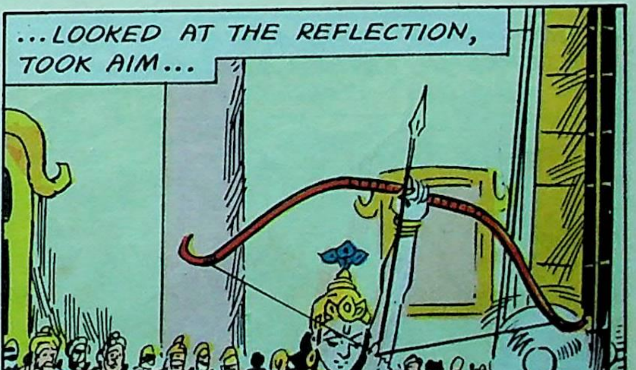
THOSE WHO SUCCESSFULLY STRUNG IT COULD NOT SHOOT STRAIGHT.



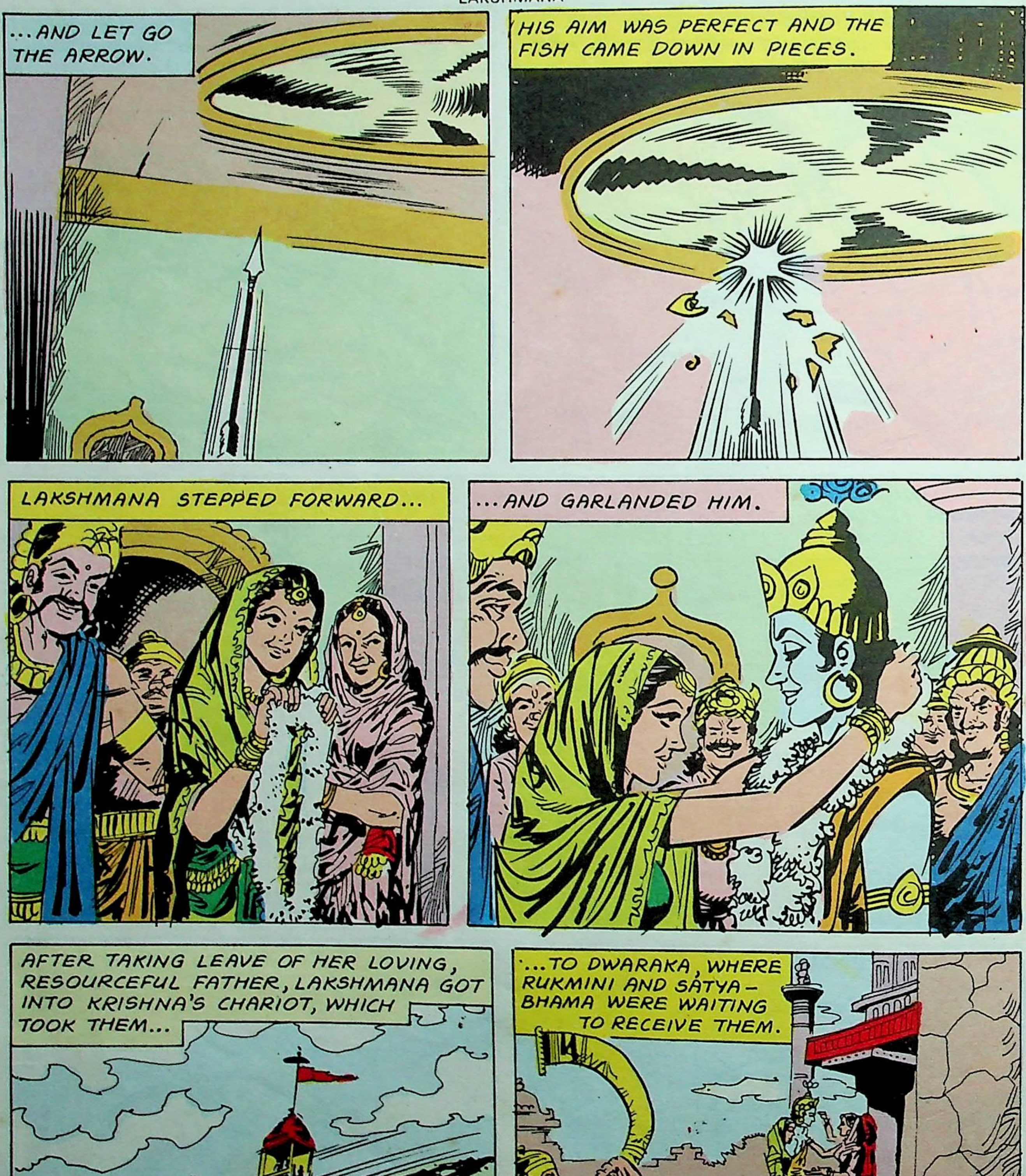
THEN CAME KRISHNA.



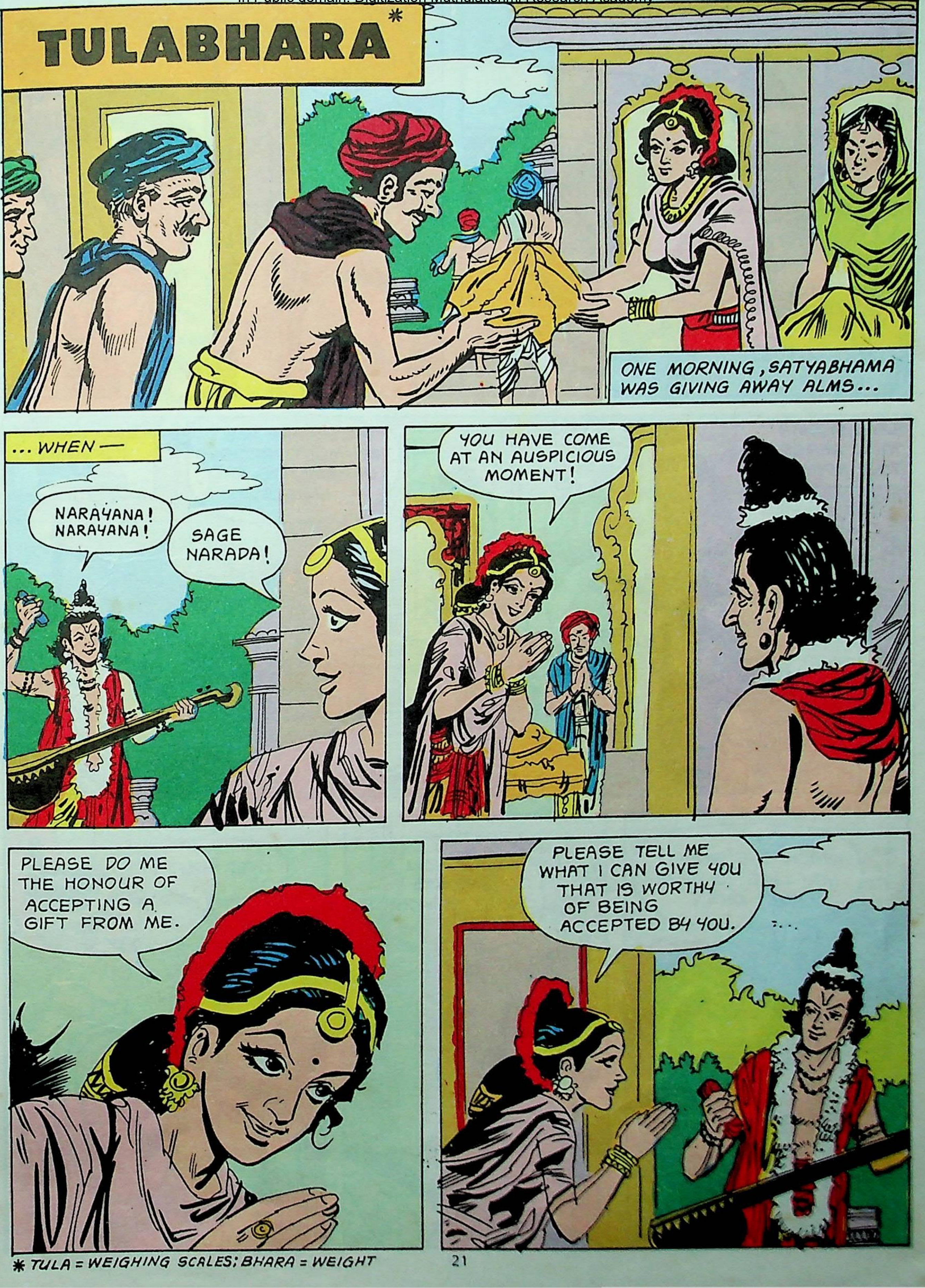
WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE HE LIFTED THE BOW WITHOUT ANY EFFORT, STRUNG IT WITH EASE...



...LOOKED AT THE REFLECTION, TOOK AIM...


...AND LET GO THE ARROW.
HIS AIM WAS PERFECT AND THE FISH CAME DOWN IN PIECES.
LAKSHMANA STEPPED FORWARD...
...AND GARLANDED HIM.
AFTER TAKING LEAVE OF HER LOVING, RESOURCEFUL FATHER, LAKSHMANA GOT INTO KRISHNA'S CHARIOT, WHICH TOOK THEM...
...TO DWARAKA, WHERE RUKMINI AND SATYA-BHAMA WERE WAITING TO RECEIVE THEM.

TULABHARA*


ONE MORNING, SATYABHAMA WAS GIVING AWAY ALMS...
... WHEN —
NARAYANA! NARAYANA!
SAGE NARADA!
YOU HAVE COME AT AN AUSPICIOUS MOMENT!
PLEASE DO ME THE HONOUR OF ACCEPTING A GIFT FROM ME.
PLEASE TELL ME WHAT I CAN GIVE YOU THAT IS WORTHY OF BEING ACCEPTED BY YOU.
...

---

* TULA = WEIGHING SCALES; BHARA = WEIGHT

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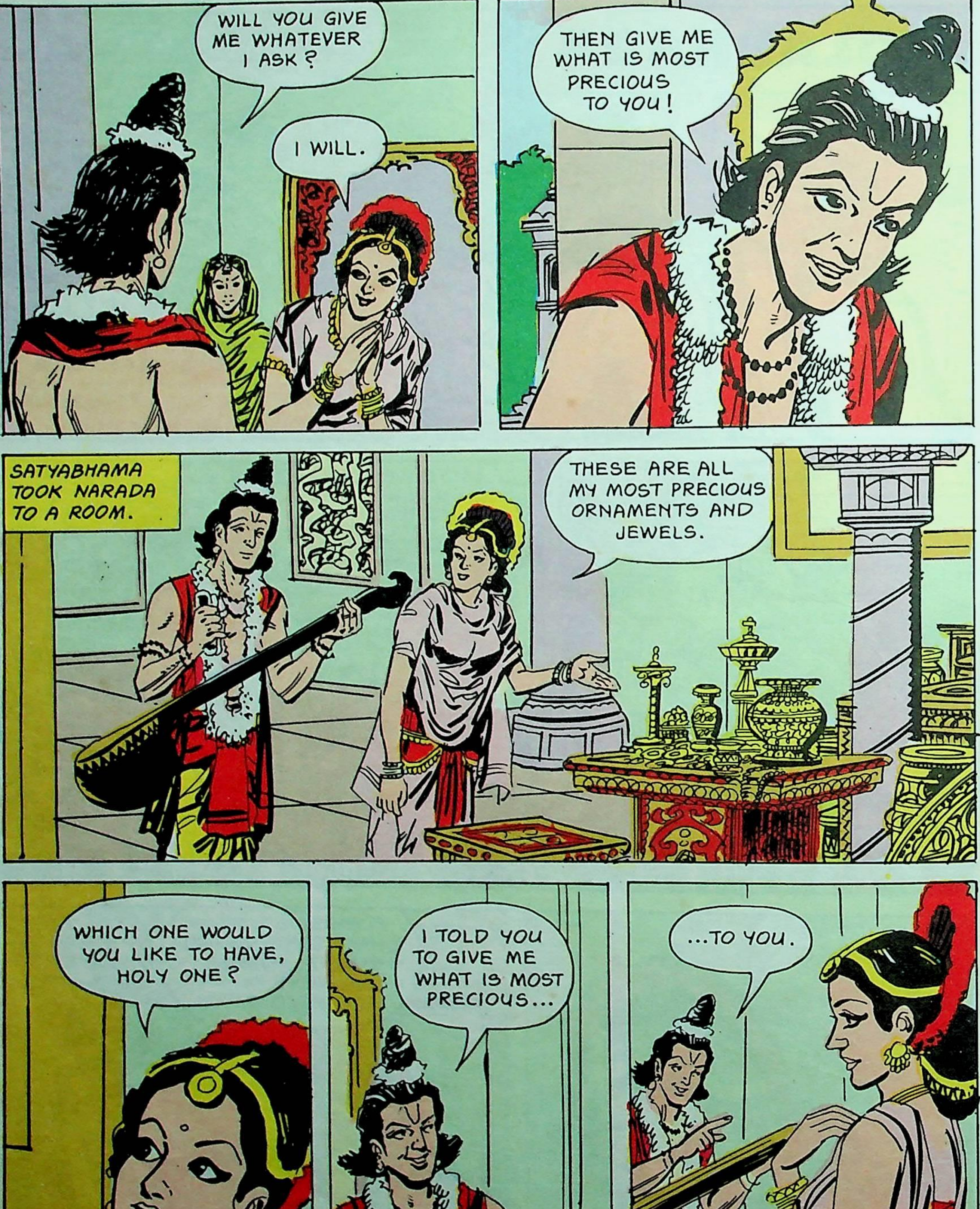
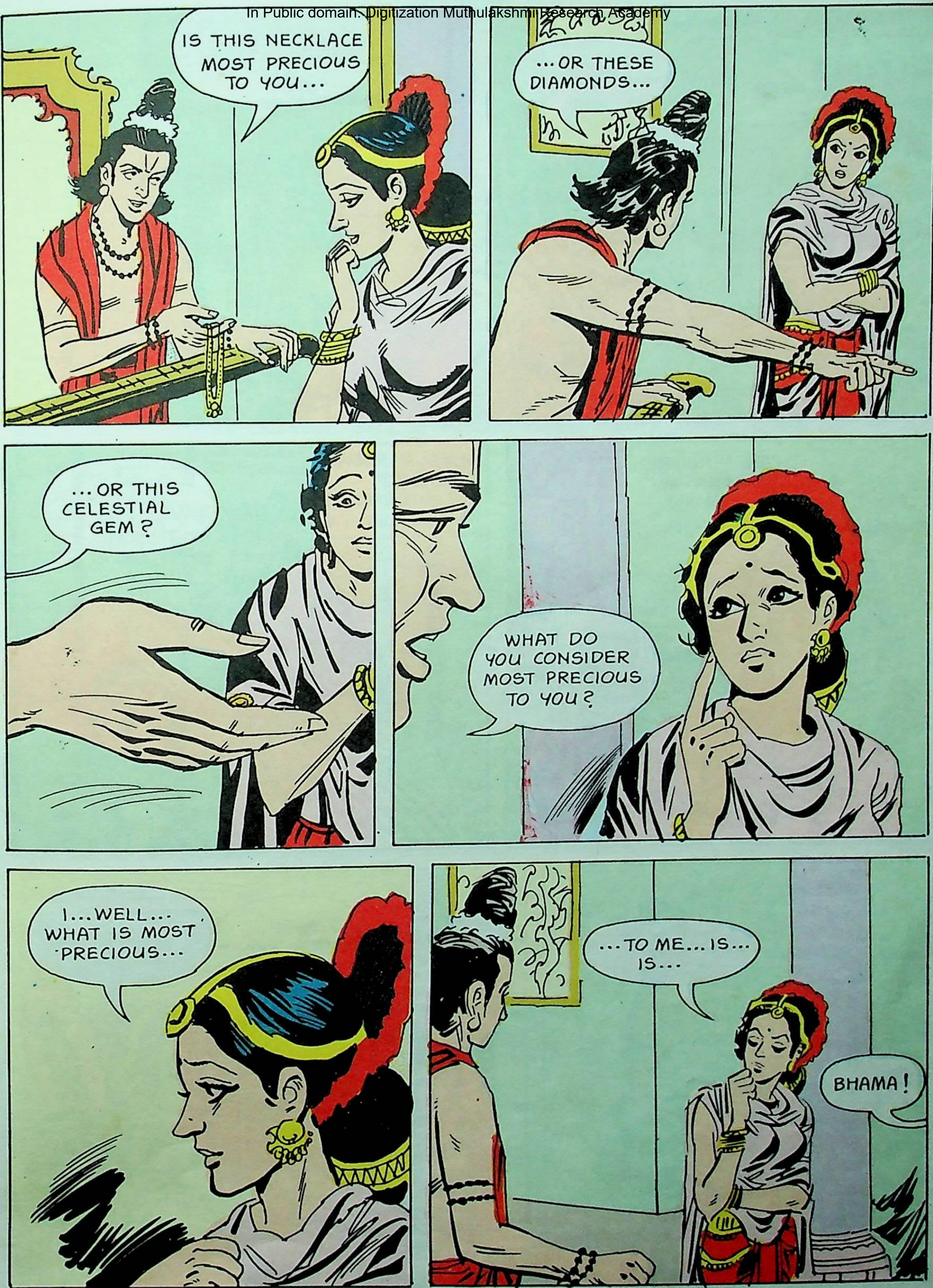
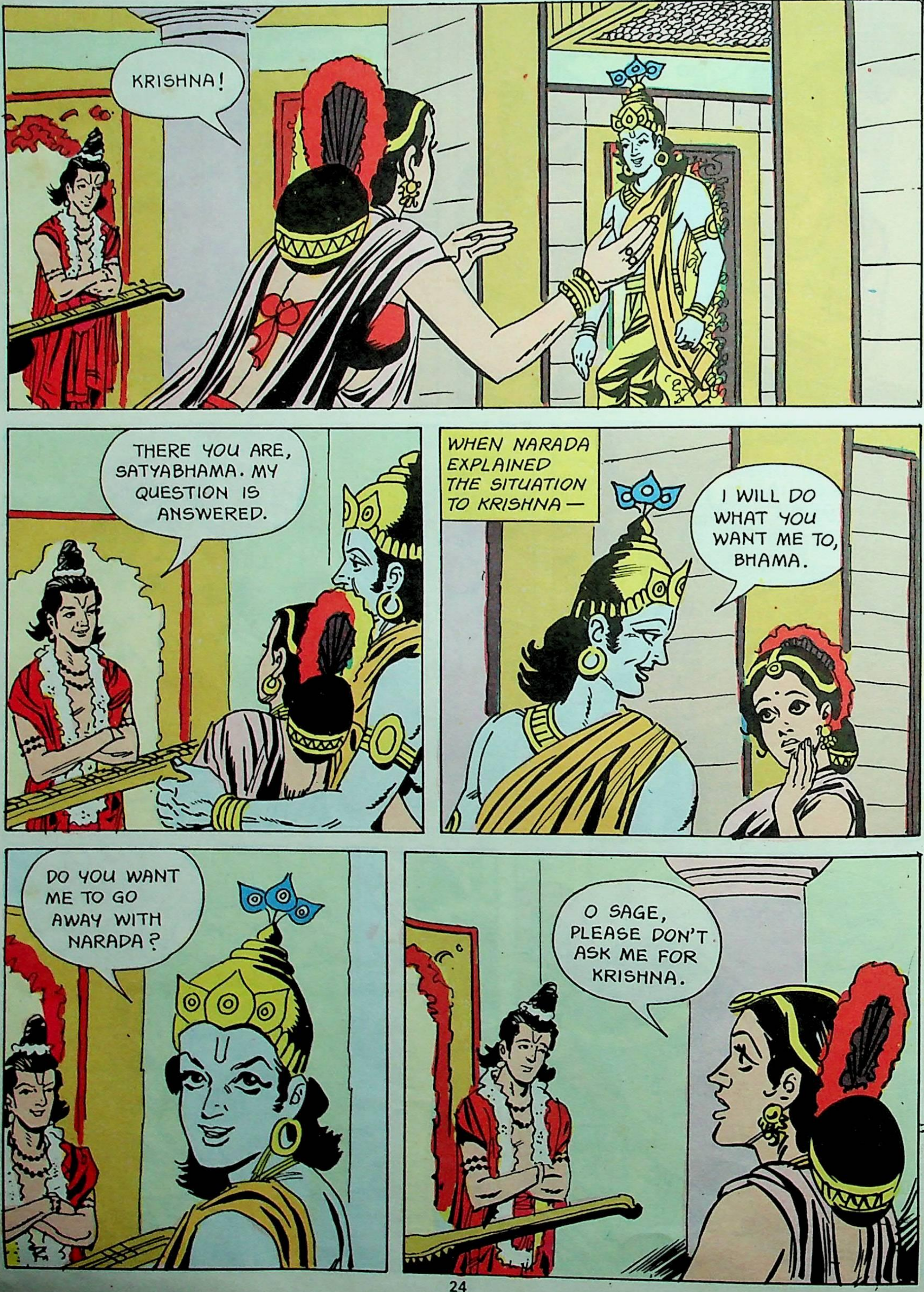
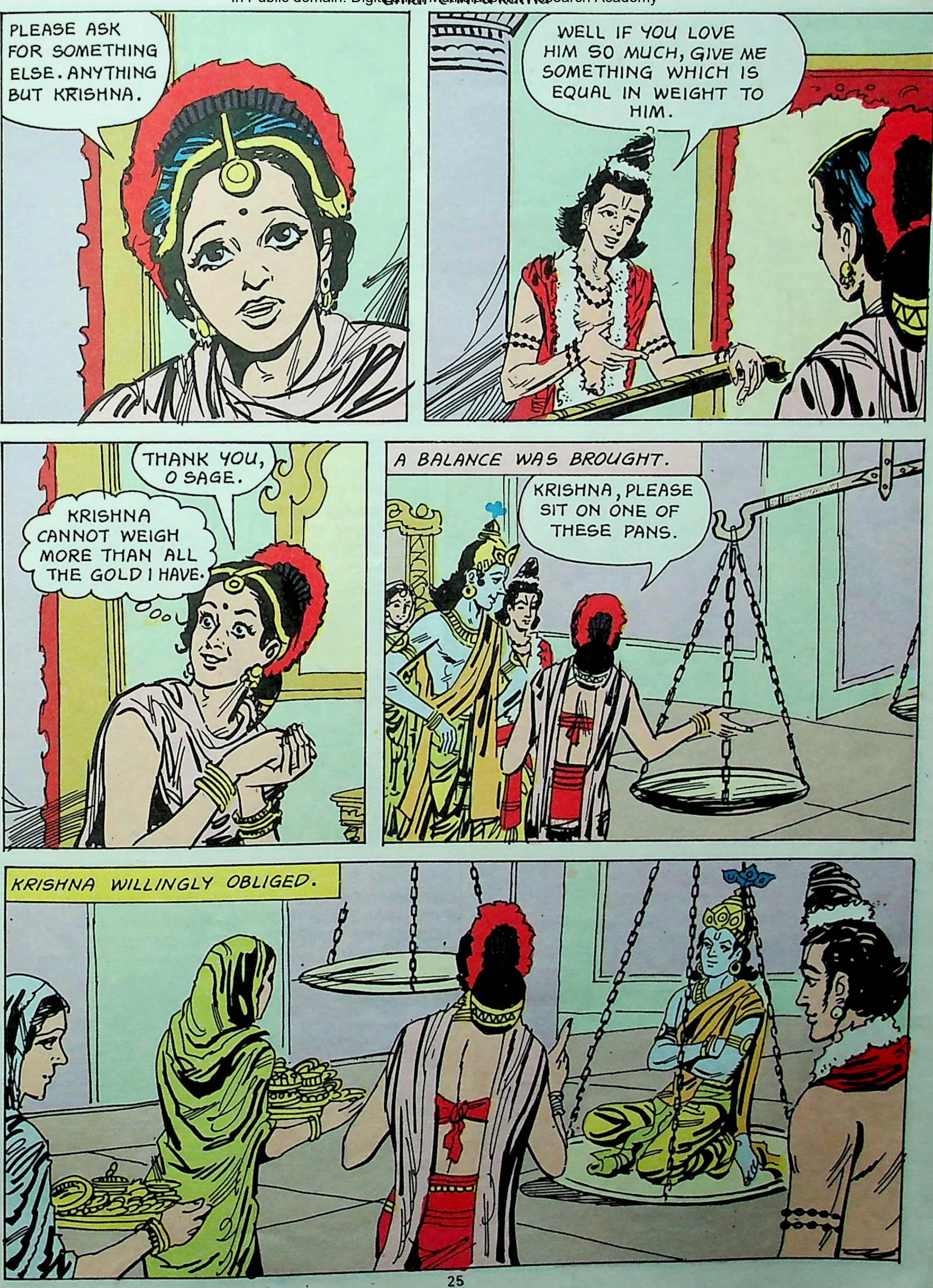
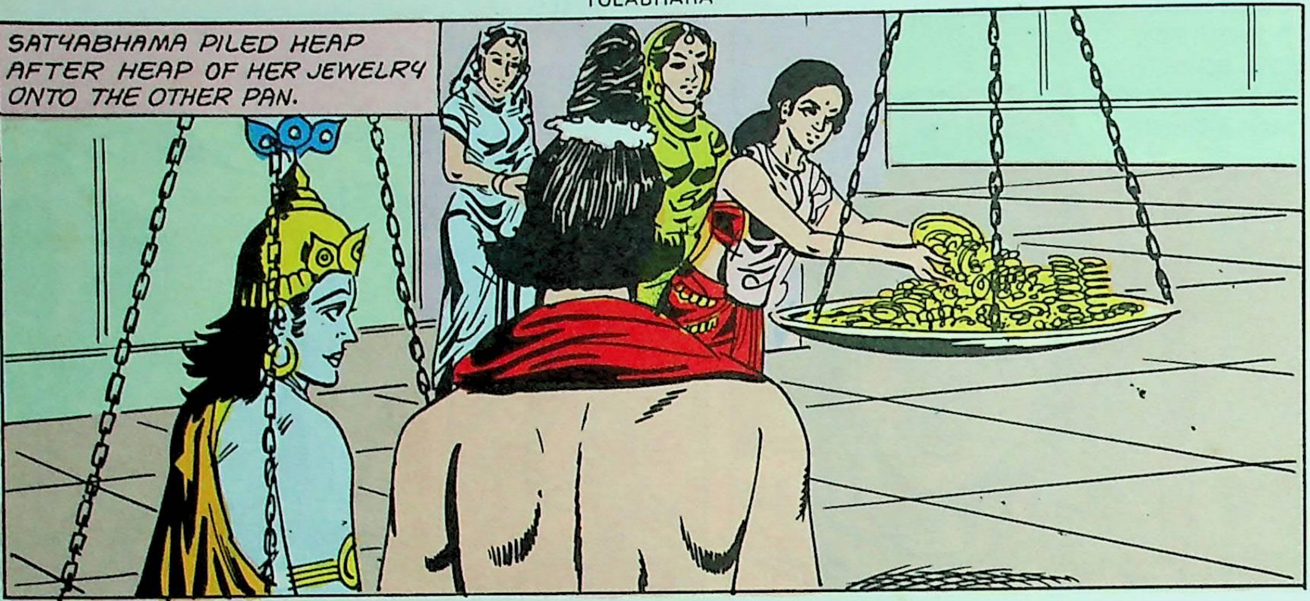
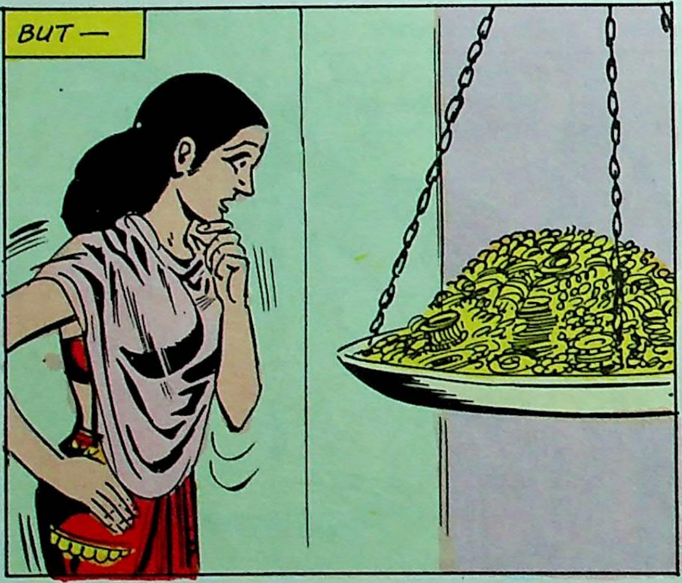

WILL YOU GIVE ME WHATEVER I ASK ?
I WILL.
THEN GIVE ME WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS TO YOU !
SATYABHAMA TOOK NARADA TO A ROOM.
THESE ARE ALL MY MOST PRECIOUS ORNAMENTS AND JEWELS.
WHICH ONE WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE, HOLY ONE ?
I TOLD YOU TO GIVE ME WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS...
...TO YOU.

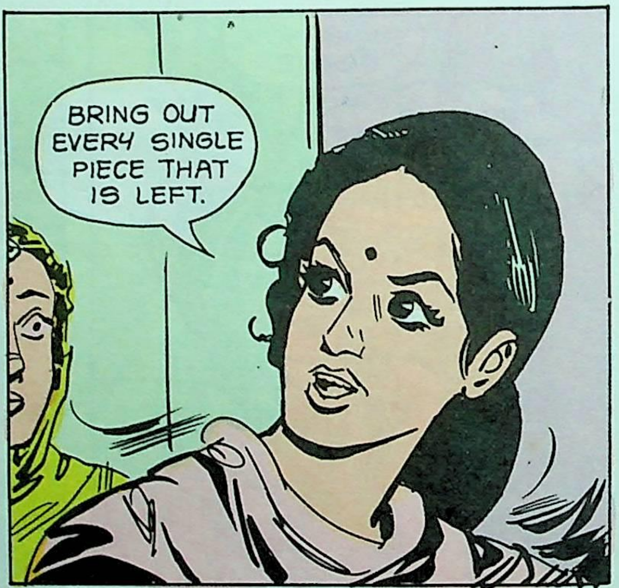

IS THIS NECKLACE MOST PRECIOUS TO YOU...
...OR THESE DIAMONDS...
...OR THIS CELESTIAL GEM?
WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER MOST PRECIOUS TO YOU?
I...WELL... WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS...
...TO ME...IS... IS...
BHAMA!

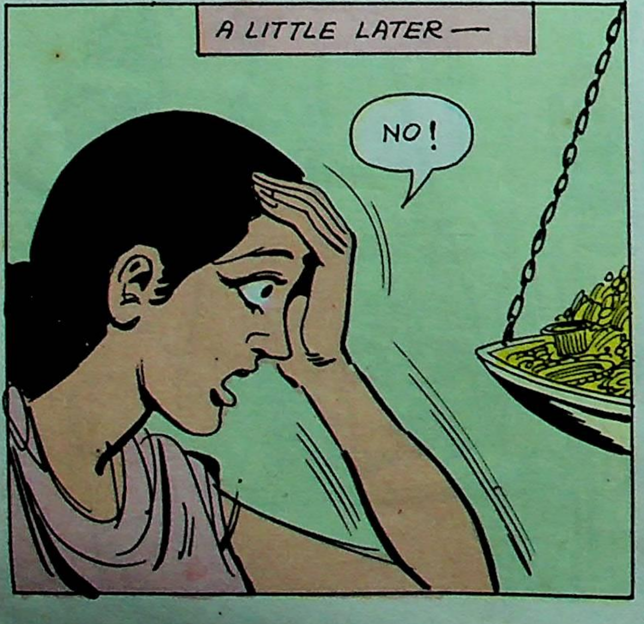

KRISHNA!
THERE YOU ARE, SATYABHAMA. MY QUESTION IS ANSWERED.
WHEN NARADA EXPLAINED THE SITUATION TO KRISHNA—
I WILL DO WHAT YOU WANT ME TO, BHAMA.
DO YOU WANT ME TO GO AWAY WITH NARADA?
O SAGE, PLEASE DON'T ASK ME FOR KRISHNA.

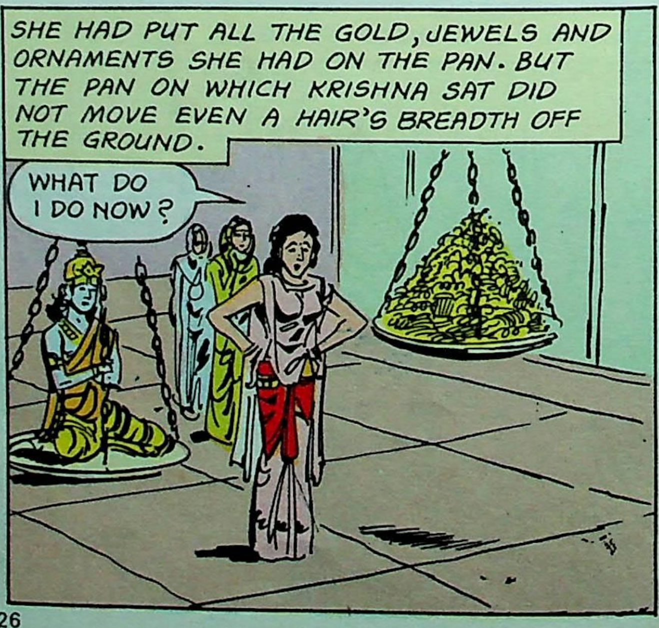

PLEASE ASK FOR SOMETHING ELSE. ANYTHING BUT KRISHNA.
WELL IF YOU LOVE HIM SO MUCH, GIVE ME SOMETHING WHICH IS EQUAL IN WEIGHT TO HIM.
THANK YOU, O SAGE.
KRISHNA CANNOT WEIGH MORE THAN ALL THE GOLD I HAVE.
A BALANCE WAS BROUGHT.
KRISHNA, PLEASE SIT ON ONE OF THESE PANS.
KRISHNA WILLINGLY OBLIGED.


SATYABHAMA PILED HEAP AFTER HEAP OF HER JEWELRY ONTO THE OTHER PAN.


BUT —


BRING OUT EVERY SINGLE PIECE THAT IS LEFT.


A LITTLE LATER —
NO!


SHE HAD PUT ALL THE GOLD, JEWELS AND ORNAMENTS SHE HAD ON THE PAN. BUT THE PAN ON WHICH KRISHNA SAT DID NOT MOVE EVEN A HAIR'S BREADTH OFF THE GROUND.
WHAT DO I DO NOW?

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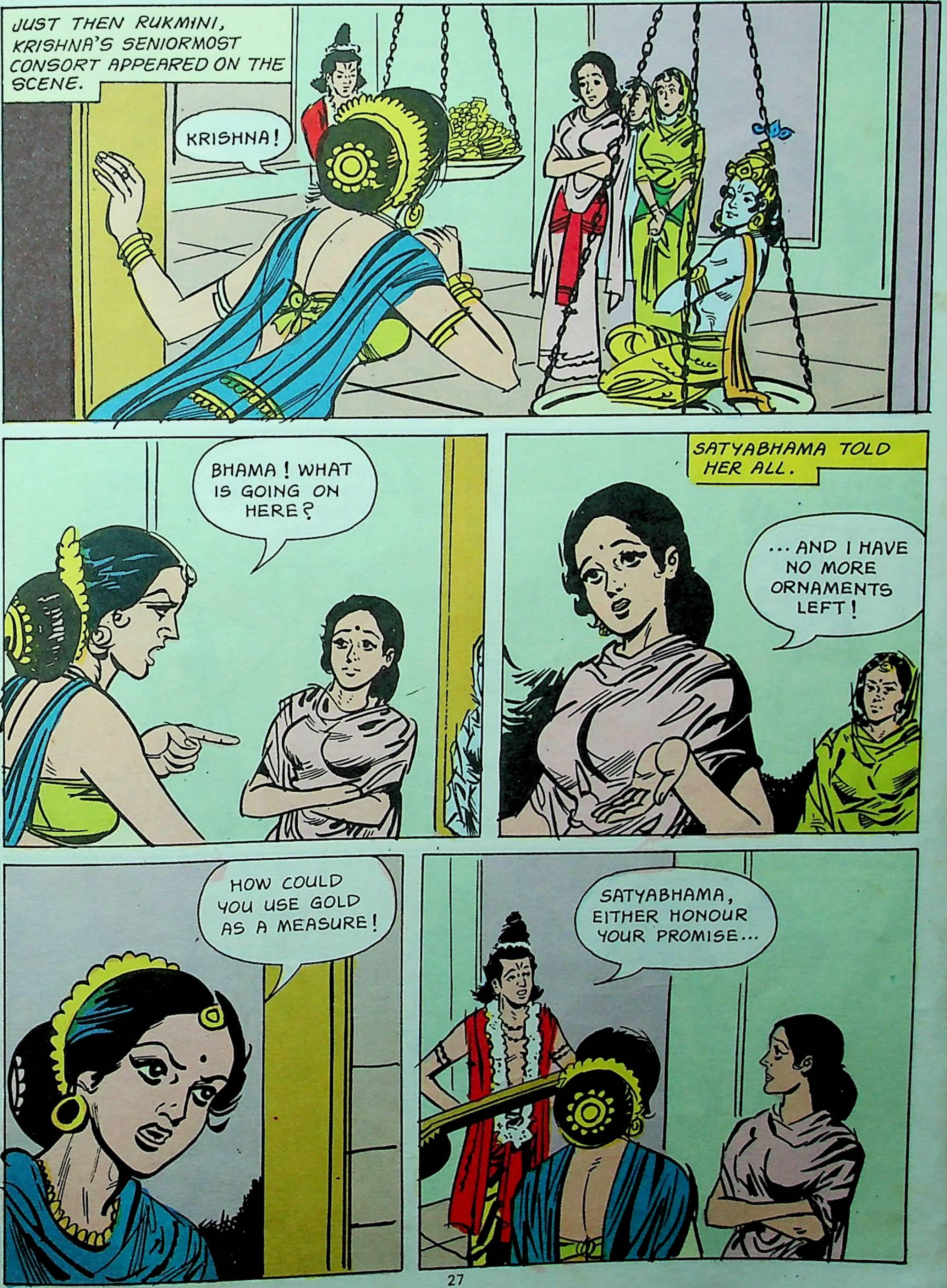
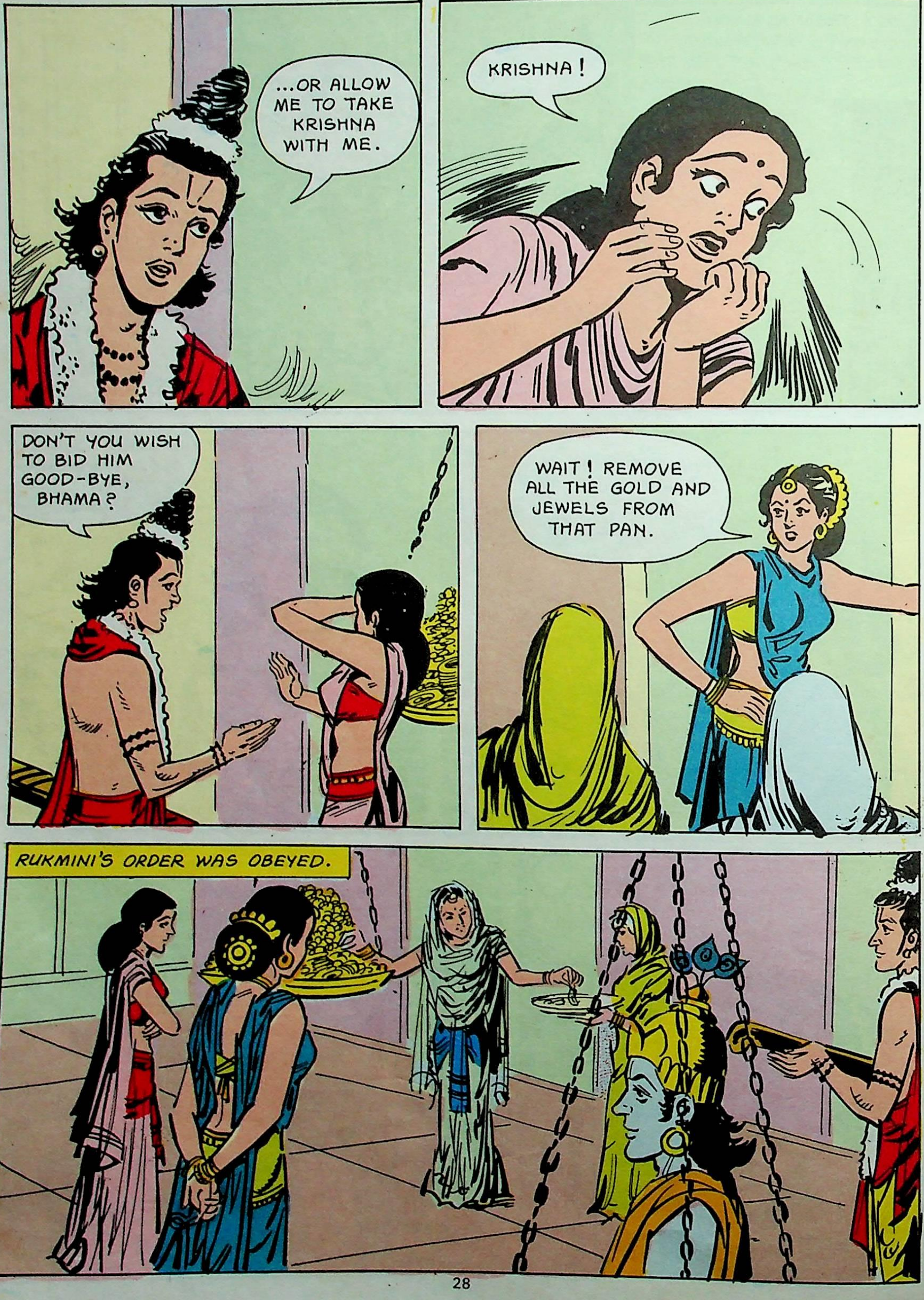
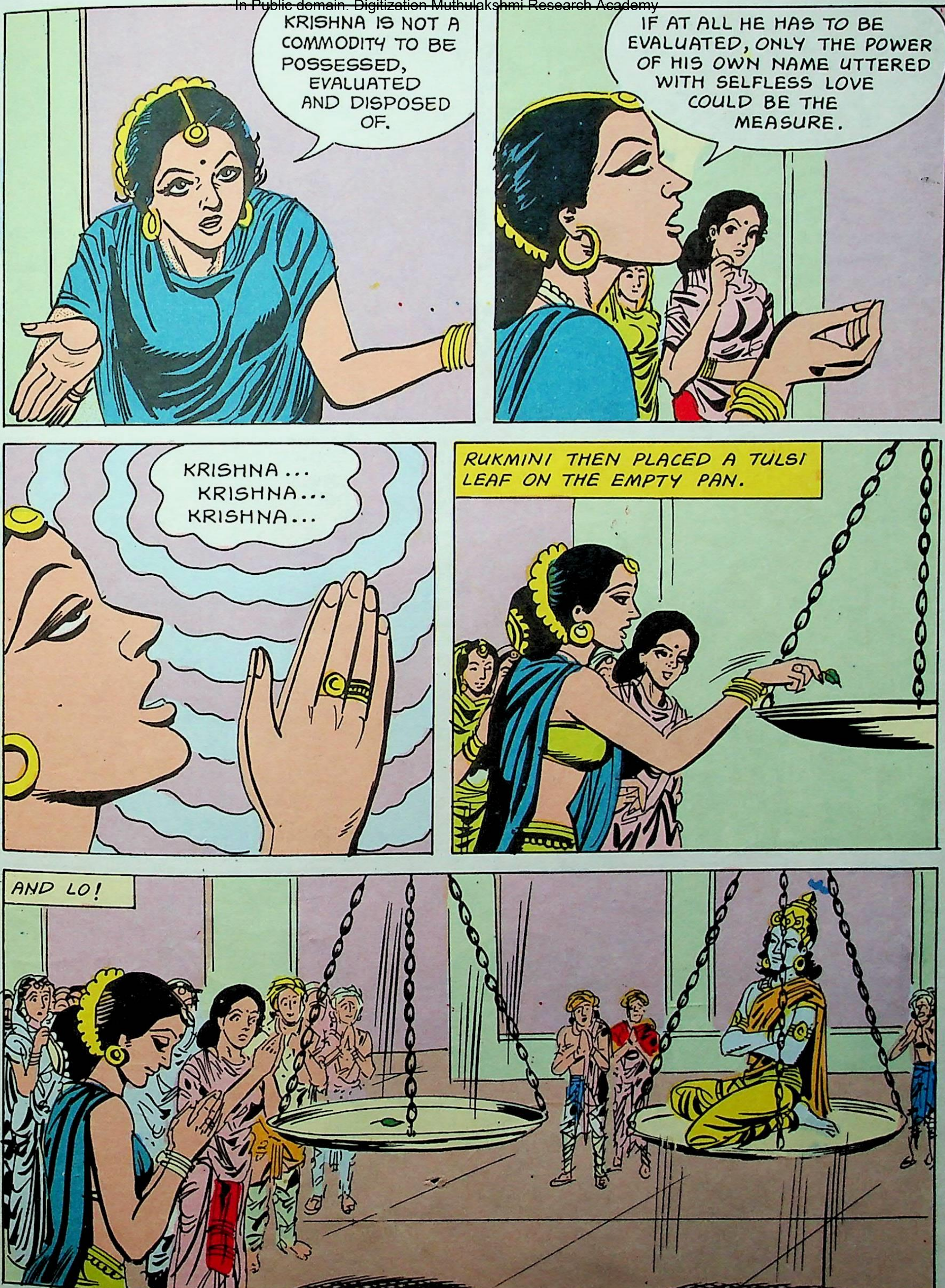
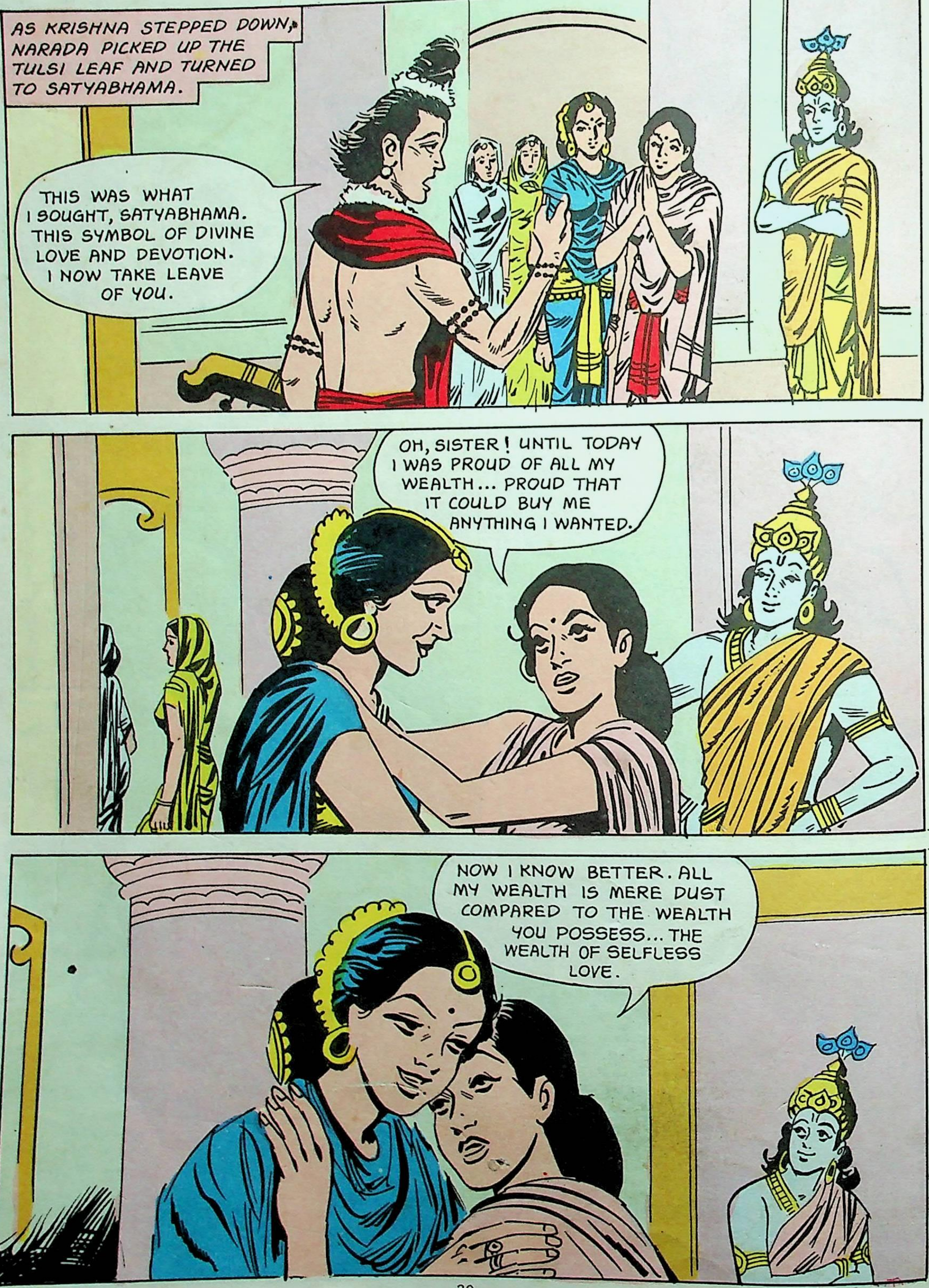

JUST THEN RUKMINI, KRISHNA'S SENIORMOST CONSORT APPEARED ON THE SCENE.
KRISHNA!
BHAMA! WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?
SATYABHAMA TOLD HER ALL.
... AND I HAVE NO MORE ORNAMENTS LEFT!
HOW COULD YOU USE GOLD AS A MEASURE!
SATYABHAMA, EITHER HONOUR YOUR PROMISE...


...OR ALLOW ME TO TAKE KRISHNA WITH ME.
KRISHNA !
DON'T YOU WISH TO BID HIM GOOD-BYE, BHAMA ?
WAIT ! REMOVE ALL THE GOLD AND JEWELS FROM THAT PAN.
RUKMINI'S ORDER WAS OBEYED.


KRISHNA IS NOT A COMMODITY TO BE POSSESSED, EVALUATED AND DISPOSED OF.
IF AT ALL HE HAS TO BE EVALUATED, ONLY THE POWER OF HIS OWN NAME UTTERED WITH SELFLESS LOVE COULD BE THE MEASURE.
KRISHNA... KRISHNA... KRISHNA...
RUKMINI THEN PLACED A TULSI LEAF ON THE EMPTY PAN.
AND LO!


AS KRISHNA STEPPED DOWN, NARADA PICKED UP THE TULSI LEAF AND TURNED TO SATYABHAMA.
THIS WAS WHAT I SOUGHT, SATYABHAMA. THIS SYMBOL OF DIVINE LOVE AND DEVOTION. I NOW TAKE LEAVE OF YOU.
OH, SISTER! UNTIL TODAY I WAS PROUD OF ALL MY WEALTH... PROUD THAT IT COULD BUY ME ANYTHING I WANTED.
NOW I KNOW BETTER. ALL MY WEALTH IS MERE DUST COMPARED TO THE WEALTH YOU POSSESS... THE WEALTH OF SELFLESS LOVE.

one